ROCK CANDY

FOR THOSE WHO WERE RAISED ON ROCK

June - July 2021

SAMMY HAGAR
TALKS HSAS

TESLA
BRIAN WHEAT Q&A

HELLOWEEN
WHY NO ONE WENT APE FOR 'PINK BUBBLES'

MAX WEBSTER
THOSE CRAZY CANUCKS!

SUZI QUATRO
RAPID FIRE RECALL

TOUCH
THERE'S MORE TO THEM THAN BEE-SWALLOWING!

LED ZEPPELIN

AT KNEBWORTH '79
THE IN-DEPTH STORY OF AN INCREDIBLE SWAN SONG

StatusQuo

ROSSI, LANCASTER, AND COGHLAN ON THE MAKING OF 'QUO LIVE!'

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ROCK CANDY

WELCOME

WELCOME TO ISSUE 26, where I'd like to spotlight our social media and Internet efforts, particularly the backroom guys and gals who toil day and night to provide these much-valued additions to *Rock Candy Mag*'s outreach programme. You may already know that over the past few years our Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter presence has grown dramatically, primarily because of the fascinating and carefully curated content kept fresh on a daily basis. The Rock Candy Records label Facebook page has always performed well, but very close on its heels is the newer magazine page, whose chief architect is John Nicholson. Elsewhere, stoking the boilers and providing the kind of bespoke social media service you all deserve are chief engineer Michael Brandvold and his lieutenant Rai Beardsley. Meanwhile each issue's promo videos – watch them at the *Rock Candy Mag* Facebook page – are created by the wonderfully talented Oliver Fowler, who crafts both the visuals *and* the musical content. Then there's the ever-protective figure of Ross Sampson – the Mack Daddy of our digital world. Ross keeps the record company and magazine ships sailing in the right direction, sorting out the endless things that, well, need sorting. The other string to Ross's bow is overseeing the tech behind the digital magazine, websites, and mailouts you receive, alerting you to the new album reissues and the launch of each magazine. The combined work of Ross, editor HoJo, and production editor Louise Johnson on these important elements is beyond impressive – and I haven't even mentioned our daredevil designer Andy Hunns and Dr Rock himself Malcolm Dome!

ISSUE 26 of *Rock Candy Mag* features some riveting content. I found the feature on 'Quo Live!' particularly interesting. Dave Ling has revealed some great insights into the recording of this classic double-live album, and his conversation with Francis Rossi has prompted an investigation into releasing a box set of all three nights' recordings, something that's always been a hot topic among Quo aficionados. I also know you'll enjoy our cover feature dissecting Led Zeppelin's amazing two-night stand at Knebworth back in 1979. Zep expert Dave Lewis brings you the full story behind the Knebworth phenomenon and analyses the performances that were the last the original line-up ever gave in the UK.

A personal highlight for me this issue is our massive article on Kim Mitchell. Canadian rock expert Paul Suter tracked the man down to get a full, blow-by-blow account of the years spent in Max Webster – one of *Rock Candy*'s favourite acts – his subsequent solo career, and also time spent as a DJ and radio presenter. Kim's a fascinating character and this interview does him full justice. Finally don't miss guitar hero Marty Friedman chatting at length with HoJo, giving us some fascinating insight into this amazing guitarist's incredible career and remarkable life in Japan.

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THIS ISSUE'S BIG QUESTION – WHAT'S THE LED ZEP SONG THAT MOST GIVES YOU GOOSEBUMPS?

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Photo: Getty Images/Pete Still/Redferns

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FROZEN IN TIME

DATELINE: 7 FEBRUARY 1977

The Foreigner line-up that recorded 1977's 'Foreigner' album. L-R: Dennis Elliott (drums), Mick Jones (guitar), Ian McDonald (guitar), Ed Gagliardi (bass), Al Greenwood (keyboards), Lou Gramm (vocals)

They're as cold as ice, they're willing to sacrifice...

THE BEAUTY OF OUR 'Frozen In Time' section is that it allows us to look at these iconic images with the benefit of hindsight, knowing exactly how the story turned out in a way that the musicians featured in the photograph clearly couldn't. And surely nowhere is this more apposite than in this issue's lovely shot of Foreigner, taken by Michael Putland in New York on 7 February 1977, almost exactly a month before the release of the Anglo-American band's debut album, 'Foreigner', on Atlantic Records.

You can clearly see excitement and anticipation in the faces of the group's six members – guitarists Mick Jones and Ian McDonald, vocalist Lou Gramm, keyboardist Al Greenwood, bassist Ed Gagliardi, and drummer Dennis Elliott – as they wait impatiently to see how the world will react to their music. But there's also a lovely, innocent camaraderie that's evident in the image, just six guys enjoying the simple pleasures of being in a band together while hoping against hope that they'll be successful enough to be able to carry on doing it.

JONES HAD already paid some dues in both Spooky Tooth and The Leslie West Band by this time, while McDonald had served time in King Crimson. But nobody in Foreigner had tasted what could genuinely be called 'The Big Time'. That was all about to change, though – and how!

When 'Foreigner' was released on 8 March 1977 it was an out-of-the-box smash. Perfectly suited to the demands of US radio, which wanted melodic rock songs with just the right amount of raunch, 'Foreigner' raced into the Top 20 of the *Billboard* US album charts and stayed there for a full year, peaking at number four and going on to sell a whopping five million copies in the States alone. Those sales were built on the back of three big hit singles – 'Feels Like The First Time', 'Cold As Ice', and 'Long, Long Way From Home' – that would establish exactly what Adult Oriented Rock sounded like and would each go on to be recognised as a classic of the genre.

FOREIGNER'S HUGE and instant success didn't fade. Sophomore release 'Double Vision' sold even more than the debut, and while third album 'Head Games' shifted fewer than its predecessors (mainly due to a controversial sleeve that many stores in the US refused to stock), 1981's 'Foreigner 4' became a worldwide commercial monster and, for many, the band's definitive musical statement.

By this time, though, all of Gagliardi, McDonald, and Greenwood had been jettisoned amid no small amount of rancour. Eventually Jones and Gramm would also fall out for many years, though the two men are now reported to be on good terms. Relations between band members rarely run smoothly, and the stories of groups with long histories are more often than not punctuated by interpersonal disputes and disagreements. All the more reason, then, to enjoy this particular photograph, where all of that stuff lies in the future, and all that's here to be seen is joy and comradeship among musical equals.

HOWARD JOHNSON

Photo: Getty Images/Michael Putland

STEP BACK IN TIME

MAY-JUNE 1983

ROCK CANDY'S DAVE LING LEAFS THROUGH THE BACK PAGES OF THE UK ROCK PRESS TO BRING THE BIG NEWS ITEMS OF THE DAY BACK TO LIFE AND ANALYSE HOW THOSE STORIES REALLY PLAYED OUT...

DIO DIVES IN

DATELINE: 17-30 JUNE 1983

MAGAZINE: *KERRANG!*

RONNIE JAMES DIO WAS the cover star of Issue 44 of *Kerrang!* The powerhouse former Elf and Rainbow singer was fresh out of Black Sabbath and launching his new band, the appropriately titled Dio. And writer Dante Bonutto braced himself for the wrath of the mag's readers by declaring the group's debut album, 'Holy Diver', "the finest of the man's career."

Bonutto's three-page story – short for a cover, surely – tried to avoid getting bogged down in the "claims and counter-claims" thrown up by Dio's fractious exit from Sabbath, now fronted by Ian Gillan. But Ronnie did insist: "I never tried to take over Black Sabbath. It never felt like it was my band. It's just that where you have weak characters, the strong are always gonna surface. I mean, I never really heard Geezer Butler make any decision other than to have another pint."

JOINING RONNIE in Dio were his old Rainbow pal and bassist Jimmy Bain, Sabbath's drummer Vinny Appice and, crucially, "a 21-year-old from Belfast", former Sweet Savage man Vivian Campbell, whom Ronnie predicted was destined for "the ranks of the guitar hero."

'Holy Diver' had been recorded in approximately four months with, according to Bonutto, "customary care over the lyrics." The *K!* man was a fan of Ronnie's wordplay, which "rarely concerned the standard booze/birds/backstage aspect of rock'n'roll lifestyle."

"My lyrics usually have a lot of different meanings and [people] can believe whatever they want," Dio commented. "I tend to write in romantic terms relating to King Arthur, knights, and that kind of thing. Even though they didn't have toilets then, it was still a wonderful imaginative age when chivalry was rampant and all the ladies were beautiful. They probably had sh*t running down their legs, but you couldn't see it under the marvellous gowns.

"I don't consider myself a poet or anything, mind," Ronnie continued. "I'm not Bob Dylan, Billy Shakespeare, Shelley, or Keats. But I do like lyrics that show you've worked at something."

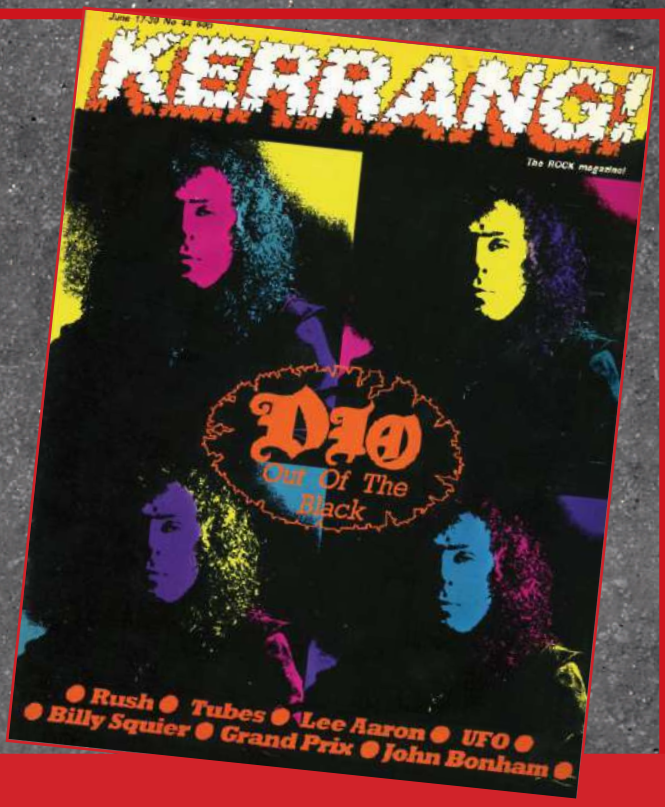
AT THE time of the interview Dio had a single UK show lined up – a one-up-from-the-bottom spot at the summer's Monsters Of Rock festival at Castle Donington, headlined by Whitesnake and featuring Meatloaf, ZZ Top,

and Twisted Sister. But the band had already tested the waters in the US opening shows for Aerosmith.

Besides the new 'Holy Diver' material, in the live arena Dio the band allowed Dio the singer to revisit past watershed moments from his Rainbow and Black Sabbath career. 'Man On The Silver Mountain' was a dead cert for inclusion in the group's setlist, with 'Starstruck' "possible" and "snatches of 'Stargazer' a very strong probable." However, those expecting to hear extended solos or a replication of 'Heaven And Hell' from Sabbath's recent 'Live Evil' double set would be sorely disappointed.

"That's a great thing to go to sleep to as far as I'm concerned," Ronnie said. "It's just too long and very, very self-indulgent."

WITH TOURS of North America, Britain, and Europe lined up for the autumn, Dio were already in the planning stages for a second album. Ronnie told Bonutto it was likely to go in "stranger directions, probably more in line with early Rainbow, because that's the kind of texture I like the most."



ROCK CANDY SAYS...

BACK IN 1983 'HOLY Diver' was exactly the album that Ronnie James Dio needed to make. The singer would later speak proudly of his involvement in three of the greatest and most important hard rock releases of all time, Rainbow's 'Rising', Sabbath's 'Heaven And Hell', and the first Dio album.

A GLOWING *Kerrang!* review by Dave Dickson theorised that RJD had been "wasted in Black Sabbath," and that ego battles between Ronnie and Ritchie Blackmore had hindered creativity during the pair's Rainbow days. Dickson had no hesitation in stating that with 'Holy Diver', "Ronnie James Dio has thrown down the gauntlet and set the standard by which all heavy metal albums of 1983 are going to be judged. This is great, triffic, brilliant, and it's going to take a hell of a lot of beating."

Dio's subsequent onstage appearance at 1983's Monsters Of Rock festival ranks among the very finest ever witnessed at the fabled Donington racetrack, and its triumphant scenes were replicated at debut British indoor dates, where the band was supported by Waysted.

FOR A while at least Dio maintained the impetus of 'Holy Diver'. Released less than a year later in the US and Britain the follow-up album, 'The Last In Line', charted higher than its predecessor. But the band was never quite as inspirational after the exit of Vivian Campbell following their third LP, 1985's 'Sacred Heart'. Campbell went on to join Whitesnake, form Riverdogs, and eventually hook up with Def Leppard, where he remains to this day.

Craig Goldy, Rowan Robertson, Tracy G, and Doug Aldrich all served time as Dio guitarists, with Jake E Lee and Warren DeMartini also playing bit parts. But the magic was there much less consistently.

SURPRISINGLY, RONNIE rejoined Sabbath for the 'Dehumanizer' album in 1991, in later years regrouping with Tony Iommi, Geezer Butler, and Vinny Appice under the new name of Heaven And Hell. This group's one and only album, 'The Devil You Know', came out in 2009. Who knows what that band might have achieved had Ronnie not sadly succumbed to stomach cancer on 16 May 2010? The little man with the massive voice is much missed.

The Dio line-up that recorded the classic 'Holy Diver' debut. L-R: Ronnie Dio (vocals), Vinny Appice (drums), Jimmy Bain (bass), Vivian Campbell (guitar)

Photos: Getty Images/Mark Weiss; Getty Images/Chris Walter WireImage

STEP BACK IN TIME

Motörhead 1983 vintage. L-R: Phil Taylor (drums), Lemmy (bass and vocals), Brian Robertson (guitar)

MOTÖRHEAD GO ROGUE

DATELINE: 14 MAY 1983

MAGAZINE: *MELODY MAKER*

AFTER THE TURBULENT EXIT of popular guitarist 'Fast' Eddie Clarke, Motörhead picked up the pieces by bringing in another huge name from the hard rock scene. By choosing Scotsman Brian Robertson, formerly of Thin Lizzy and Wild Horses, bassist and vocalist Lemmy and drummer 'Philthy Animal' Taylor selected a gifted musician who nevertheless had a well-established reputation as something of a wild card.

Though less "demented" than he'd first feared, *Melody Maker* writer Adam Sweeting found Robertson every bit as "garrulous" as expected, Robbo greeting him with a violent tale of taking on a drug gang in Amsterdam during his Thin Lizzy days.

"I grabbed this guy by the lapels, right, then I gave him a slap round the mouth..."

SWEETING HAD been invited along to a Motörhead rehearsal at Nomis Studios in London to discuss the finer points of the band's new release, 'Another Perfect Day'. "Where records like 'Ace Of Spades' and 'Iron Fist' were a bit like wrecking balls," the writer explained, "'Another Perfect Day' is sort of spacier, kinda wider-ranging."

"Before, our records were like being punched in the teeth," Philthy observed. "Now it's like being punched in the teeth with an apology afterwards."

OF COURSE, much of this subtle change had to do with the addition of Robertson who, besides revealing that he had been "classically trained", also noted that no fewer than 13 different guitars were used during the making of the album.

"The first and last songs are like old Motörhead," nodded Lemmy, referencing 'Back At The Funny Farm' and 'Die You Bastard!', before adding with a grin: "Then in the middle it's gone all curly. A lot of it's more or less the same as we would have done, but the great thing with Brian is he can carry a solo longer than Eddie could or did. He also plays rhythm a lot differently than Eddie did. Eddie was a good rhythm guitarist, but he couldn't swap over at a moment's notice."

IN KEEPING with *Melody Maker*'s traditional disdain for rock music, Sweeting admitted that he'd treated Motörhead as "preposterous sub-humans" until realising, "People who live like this and make this noise must know something I don't."

Adam got on well with his subjects, Kilmister forcing him to share their Marlboro cigarettes instead of his own soggy roll-ups. "Put that out," barked Lemmy scornfully. Whether or not other critics would prove more welcoming to the Robbo era was something for the future.

"Now that we've changed a bit and [the music] *is* a bit more melodic, let's see what they say now," pondered Lemmy. "I'm sure they'll think of something negative."

LEMMY KNEW how to end an interview in style, grabbing a motorcycle magazine and declaring, "If you'll excuse me for a moment, I'm going for a sh*t".

"There is toilet paper, you know?" Philthy chirruped.

"But it's not glossy, is it?" replied Lem.

The same old Motörhead then, only different.

ROCK CANDY SAYS...

BRIAN ROBERTSON'S SPELL WITH Motörhead didn't last very long. At the time 'Another Perfect Day' was generally greeted with caution that verged on suspicion. *Kerrang!*'s Malcolm Dome suggested the band were "still cracking the same old joke," predicting: "The future for Motorshed [sic] isn't exactly platinum, gold or silver – unless that happens to be the colour choice for coffin handles these days." Ouch!

And yet conventional wisdom tells us that Motörhead *should* have been applauded for taking new chances without selling out their roots. Many years later, after a period of reappraisal, 'Dancing On Your Grave' and 'I Got Mine' were reinstated to the band's set-list and were greeted like old favourites by the fans.

MUSICALLY SPEAKING, the styles of Robertson and Motörhead were a reasonable fit. What really led to this line-up falling apart in less than a year was personality clashes – not to mention a few fashion differences. Robertson had decided it would be a good idea to sport a headband, super-tight shorts, and leg warmers onstage, primarily to wind his new colleagues up.

"Brian's a great musician and it's not as though the man can't write, but he's wasted it all," Lemmy told me in a 2015 interview, the same year the frontman passed away. "It's incredible, man. All that sh*t about being dressed differently [to the rest of the band]; all the wearing of the stupid shorts, it was just to get at me. Or [as he sometimes maintained] to make sure everybody knew he was *in* Motörhead, though just as a featured *guest artiste*, doing us a favour from his great heights as a Thin Lizzy guitar player. Do *me* a favour."

Adam Sweeting gets into another fine mess with MOTORHEAD. Photography: Paul Rider

SO HOW come Sounds get the VIP treatment? I mean, an afternoon out with Motorhead at a sewage plant in Rickmansworth – luxury. The Maker, however, had to be satisfied with the deep-pile corridors of the Nomis rehearsal complex dahn in Olympia, where the handsome threesome were supposed to be rehearsing for their forthcoming tour.

Rehearsing can mean many things to different people. To the remarkable Lemmy, the original renaissance man with a heart of pure noise, it means a stiff vodka always within easy reach, a heap of Marshall stacks and a pile of ten pees to shovel down the greedy throat of the Nomis Donkey Kong machine.

Our story begins with His Lemship preoccupied with the latter pastime.

"Christ!" said Lemmy, failing once again to rescue the digital Fay Wray and watching the distressing earthward plunge of the protagonist. "Can you play this bloody thing?"

"It's a difficult machine, that," I assured him, remembering with suppressed mirth the sight of suave John Barlon cashing cheques over the bar to pay for another couple of hundred trial runs.

Lemmy gave up. "This way," he said tersely, motioning the Maker faction down the corridor with a flick of his legionnaire locks and a brief glimpse of teeth eroded by years of corrosive sound and, well, "hard living".

We followed.

Marillion were hard at it next door, discernible by a series of dull thuds coming through the wall. Motorhead, unearthed by agit, had huddled around a pile of flight cases and unfriendly plastic chairs near the door, as far as possible from the forbidding walls of amplification at the far end of the room. They meant work.

These days, of course, Motorhead are Lemmy, the redoubtable Phil Taylor on [illegible] and relatively new boy Brian "Robbo" Robertson on [illegible] guitars. I'm not sure [illegible] but I always had the impression of Robertson as a [illegible]

of sarshot of a bottle of Scotch and the sort of shap liable to greet one of these effete journalist types with a crisp right hook followed closely by a low-flying knee.

I had the first bit right, but in fact Robertson on this occasion turned out to be positively garrulous, readily and willing to expound on all manner of strange topics. The sorry plight of the South Moluccans who live in Holland, for example, or memoirs of a Thin Lizzy guitarist (as he then was) trying to reach an understanding with the druggy gangs of Amsterdam.

"I grabbed this guy by the [illegible] Robbo explained in [illegible] Scottish. "Then I gave him a slap round the mouth, stuck my hand in his pocket and took all the money he had. I said this is mine, see?' His mates were just standing there dumbstruck.

"Then I says to this guy with me, he was there to give me support, right?, I said' do something'. He went to hit this other guy and the geezer just punched him and he hit the desk. I thought, 'Oh that's fucking great, this guy's supposed to be protecting me and he's just decked it'.

"As Robbo got deeper and deeper into the saga, Phil Taylor curled up on the small, uncomfortable sofa. "Ask Phil how he feels," Lemmy ordained.

"How do you feel, Phil?" I asked.

"Full of gale force winds and gases," said Taylor, belching magnificently. Had the interview begun, I wondered? Perhaps it was already over.

I thought I'd better ask Motorhead about their new LP "Another Perfect Day" – due for release in a couple of weeks, it's the first one they've done with Robertson tackling guitar duties, Eddie Clarke having deemed Lemmy's single with Wendy O Williams to be the last straw and walking out to form Fastway.

"Another Perfect Day" might come as a surprise to some. It's different – for Motorhead, anyway. Where records like 'Ace Of Spades' or 'Iron Fist' were a bit like being struck by one of those things they use to knock down buildings, 'Day' is ringing. Much of this must be attributed to Robertson, a one-man guitar army who loves nothing better than to hole up in a studio and pile on layer after layer of guitars.

Before, our records were like being punished in the [illegible]," said Taylor, probably awakened by the sound of loud sniffing sounds from the direction of his fellow musicians. "Now it's like being

Just the thought of Robbo's "stupid shorts" made Lemmy mad

AFTER HIS last gig with Motörhead in Berlin in November 1983, Brian went on to play with Frankie Miller and also joined Statetrooper. Regrettably, little of note has been heard of Robbo since the release of a debut solo album, 'Diamonds And Dirt', in 2011.

Photos: Getty Images/Paul Natkin; Getty Images/Pete Cronin/Redferns

STEP BACK IN TIME

The Black Sabbath line-up that toured 'Born Again' clockwise from top: Geezer Butler (bass), Ian Gillan (vocals), Tony Iommi (guitar), Bev Bevan (drums)

GILLAN GETS WITH SABS

DATELINE: 5-18 MAY 1983

MAGAZINE: *KERRANG!*

ALMOST FOUR DECADES LATER, Black Sabbath's appointment of Ian Gillan as their new lead vocalist still ranks as a solid gold 'WTF Moment'. Appropriately, *Kerrang!* covered this huge story across two issues. First Chris Welch attended a press conference to announce the new line-up and grabbed some exclusive words from bassist Geezer Butler. And in the following issue Pete Makowski sat down for an official quizzing of Gillan, Butler, and guitarist Tony Iommi.

"What's happening is that I'm singing with the band and that Bill Ward is officially back," Ian told the assembled press throng. "We've rehearsed for two weeks and we're all very excited. The plan is to go into the studio and then get out on the road and do the business."

CLEARLY, THERE was no love lost between Butler and departing singer Ronnie James Dio. Geezer complained bitterly that the vocalist, along with former drummer Vinny Appice, had started secretly making an RJD solo album during the ill-fated mixing of Sabbath's concert release 'Live Evil'. With allegations flying about that Dio had tampered with the mix to enhance his own contribution, Geezer felt the band had no alternative but to get rid of both musos.

"Ronnie denies he did that, but the engineer told us," he sighed. "Ronnie has a strong personality, but [in the end] he overdid it."

A FORTNIGHT later in the interview proper, Gillan, Iommi, and Butler were in a more positive frame of mind. Contrary to rock folklore there was no mention of Gillan getting so wrecked at their first meeting that he forgot agreeing to join the band. However, the singer did own up to reservations in agreeing to even discuss the possibility.

"I'd expected [them to be] hard-nosed cynics, lethargic tax exiles, laid back and all that, and that was just completely wrong," he said. "They were so fresh and enthusiastic; we had the same sense of humour and musical backgrounds."

When asked about the condition of his voice following the dissolution of the Gillan band, Ian revealed that developing nodes on his throat had caused cancellations during what became a bad-tempered farewell tour.

"It wasn't a good way of doing it," he admitted. "But we were scared of cancelling the tour completely. The [financial] implications were far too serious."

Ian sounded glad to see the back of the Gillan band. "There was a definite need for change. The Sabbath thing came at exactly the right time."

GEEZER WAS thrilled by the reunion with his rhythm section partner Ward. "He's great, is our Bill," he smiled, adding somewhat controversially: "Vinny was just filling in."

THIS NEW, Gillan-helmed incarnation of Sabbath was already preparing an album. "So far it's very riff orientated... very heavy," revealed Tony Iommi. "It's going to be a concept sort of a thing. Since Ozzy, we haven't had a vocalist who can put this sort of stuff over."

Would the new line-up include any Deep Purple in their live set?

"Listen, this is Black Sabbath, right?" said Gillan. "Obviously we're going to do those old Sabbath numbers, but we haven't discussed any [other] songs. First we've got to prove that we're here to stay, because what counts is what happens from day one.

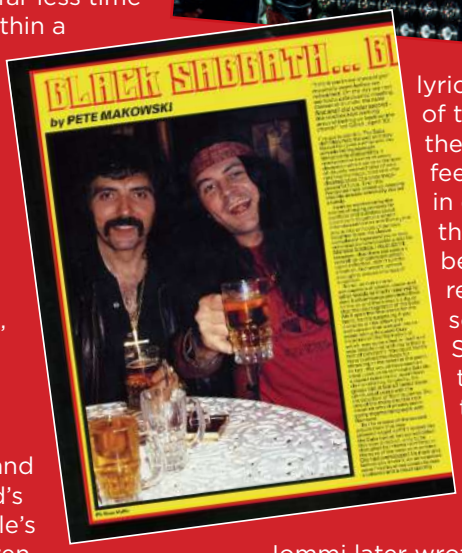
Photos: IconicPix/George Bodnar Archive; Getty Images/L. Busacca/WireImage

ROCK CANDY SAYS...

Geezer and Gillan onstage together during their short-lived collaboration in Sabbath

ALREADY AWARE THAT A reunion of Deep Purple was likely, Ian Gillan nevertheless told the press what they wanted to hear about his commitment to Black Sabbath, though he must have had some idea that his appointment would only be temporary. His exact words at the press conference were: "I'm looking forward to a productive and exciting three years ahead." Three years. One album and a world tour, perhaps, and then onto whatever might come around the bend.

In fact, Gillan's stay with Sabbath lasted far less time than he'd anticipated. The singer exited within a year of the press conference, at the end of a tour in March '84 in support of the 'Born Again' album.



RELEASED IN August of '83, 'Born Again' is an underrated gem in the Sabbath catalogue. If you haven't heard it for a while then do yourself a favour and dig it out again. Bill Ward's stay in the band this time around was even shorter than Gillan's, though. He quit after the album had been finished and Sabbath drafted in ELO man Bev Bevan for the tour.

'ZERO THE Hero', 'Disturbing The Priest', and 'Digital Bitch' formed the basis of the band's live set and, yes, Sabbath *did* include Purple's old faithful 'Smoke On The Water'. The seven-month global jaunt, which included a headline spot at the Reading Festival, is mainly remembered for two hilarious reasons. Firstly, Gillan's inability to recall all the lyrics of the Sabs songs, which meant there was always a lyric sheet at his feet that would often get swamped in dry ice, making it impossible for the singer to read the words! And better still, in a misunderstanding reminiscent of the classic scene from *This Is Spinal Tap*, a Stonehenge stage prop was made that couldn't fit into most of the tour venues. Unlike Tap's version, which was only 18 inches tall, Sabbath's was just *too big*.

IN HIS autobiography *Iron Man*, Iommi later wrote: "Up until that point I'd only worked with people who were completely committed. Looking back now, it doesn't look as if Ian was." Gillan rejoined Deep Purple in April 1984.

SNIPPETS – SHORT, SHARP SHOCKS FROM MAY-JUNE 1983

COZY POWELL: "MY SOLOS ARE FOR THE KIDS"

DATELINE: 3-16 JUNE 1983
MAGAZINE: *KERRANG!*

In an interview for his new album 'Octopuss' drummer Cozy Powell insisted that the drum solo spot that had become his trademark was included "for the kids". "Mine is short, sweet, and has lots of effects. It's very spectacular," he said. Powell also claimed that after joining Whitesnake he'd tried to drop his drum solos, "but David [Coverdale] said I had to do one production number."

NEIL PEART CALLS BRITISH FANS "SHAMELESS"

DATELINE: 17-30 JUNE 1983
MAGAZINE: *KERRANG!*

Using a rare press interview conducted during a British tour for the album 'Signals', Rush drummer Neil Peart voiced disappointment at the intrusive behaviour of the UK's more enthusiastic fans. "It makes me violently angry that they feel you owe them everything, that you have no right to privacy," the drummer fumed. "They phone you in the middle of the night, they peek in your windows... it's shameless."

US PREACHER INCITES OZZY MURDER

DATELINE: 21 APRIL-4 MAY 1983
MAGAZINE: *KERRANG!*

Ozzy Osbourne revealed that during a recent tour a preacher had given a radio broadcast urging somebody to do the "decent, American thing" and shoot the singer dead onstage. "There will always be some guy who thinks the only way to make his name is to waste a b*stard like me," Ozzy said soberly. "But if someone's gonna shoot me they ain't gonna phone up and say so."

MY FIRST GIG

DATELINE: 15 JUNE 1974, OTTAWA, CANADA

"IT WAS TRULY MIND-BLOWING"

MEGA-SUCCESSFUL CANADIAN ROCKER **BRYAN ADAMS** TAKES US BACK TO A **DAVID BOWIE** SHOW IN OTTAWA THAT ENDED IN A FULL-BLOWN RIOT!

"FROM AN EARLY AGE I knew I was going to be a musician, though whether I was going to be any good was another question! But my first concert definitely confirmed that ambition.

"Like a lot of kids growing up in Canada in the late '60s and early '70s, the first band I got into was The Beatles. But when I was about nine or 10 I discovered Deep Purple and became a really big fan. By the time I was 13 it was pretty much hard rock all the way for me, and I started getting into bands like Led Zeppelin. The thing that I found most interesting about Zep was that as hard as they rocked, and as heavy as they were, they also had these amazing moments where they'd bring things right down and play acoustic material. I remember thinking how important that was.

"DAVID BOWIE had the same thing with light and shade. In 1974 Bowie was huge in Canada, so when a show in Ottawa was announced my friends and I all knew about it. Everyone loved 'Ziggy Stardust', while the new album he was promoting at the time, 'Diamond Dogs', was reported to be the last of David's 'glam' era. Needless to say, we all got tickets.

"The show was at this big ice hockey arena in downtown Ottawa and our tickets were at the very top of the building. We stayed up there for a bit, but the view wasn't that great, so we decided to try to worm our way down toward the front. And the closer we got the more impressive everything looked.

"I HONESTLY had no idea what Bowie was going to be like in the flesh, but the fact that it turned out to be such a visual spectacle – and so theatrical as well – made it truly mind-blowing. From what I remember a good chunk of the set was 'Diamond Dogs' material. It was great to hear songs like 'Rebel Rebel' and 'Diamond Dogs' itself being played live. But David already had so much good material even back then. Who wouldn't enjoy 'Space Oddity', 'Suffragette City', 'Aladdin Sane', and 'All The Young Dudes'?

"BOWIE HAD this amazing set that he called 'Hunger City', a futuristic decaying backdrop for his show. There were tall buildings in the background going up into points, with a catwalk across the top. There was also a cherry picker, and at one point during the set Bowie got onto it to elevate himself above the crowd in dramatic fashion. All was going well until the cherry picker suddenly ground to a halt! David was stuck up there for two songs, which we all had a good laugh about.

"I REMEMBER that the crowd went wild for the show, but once David had finished the main set he didn't come back for an encore. Maybe he was still angry about getting stuck up in the cherry picker! But the audience was so upset that Bowie didn't come back onstage that they immediately trashed the place. It turned into a full-scale proper barney down the front. All the chairs got thrown up onto the stage, smashing the band's equipment and totalling everything. As a first gig it was quite an introduction to the world of rock'n'roll!

"INTERESTINGLY ENOUGH, many years ago I was working with [famous composer and orchestral arranger] Michael Kamen and we talked about that Bowie concert. He told me that he was the musical director on that very tour! So he was at the same show as me in Ottawa! It's weird how things come full circle, isn't it?"

Interview by Xavier Russell. Photos: Getty Images/Beth Gwinn/Redferns; Getty Images/Duncan Raban/Popperfoto

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WAYWARD SONS
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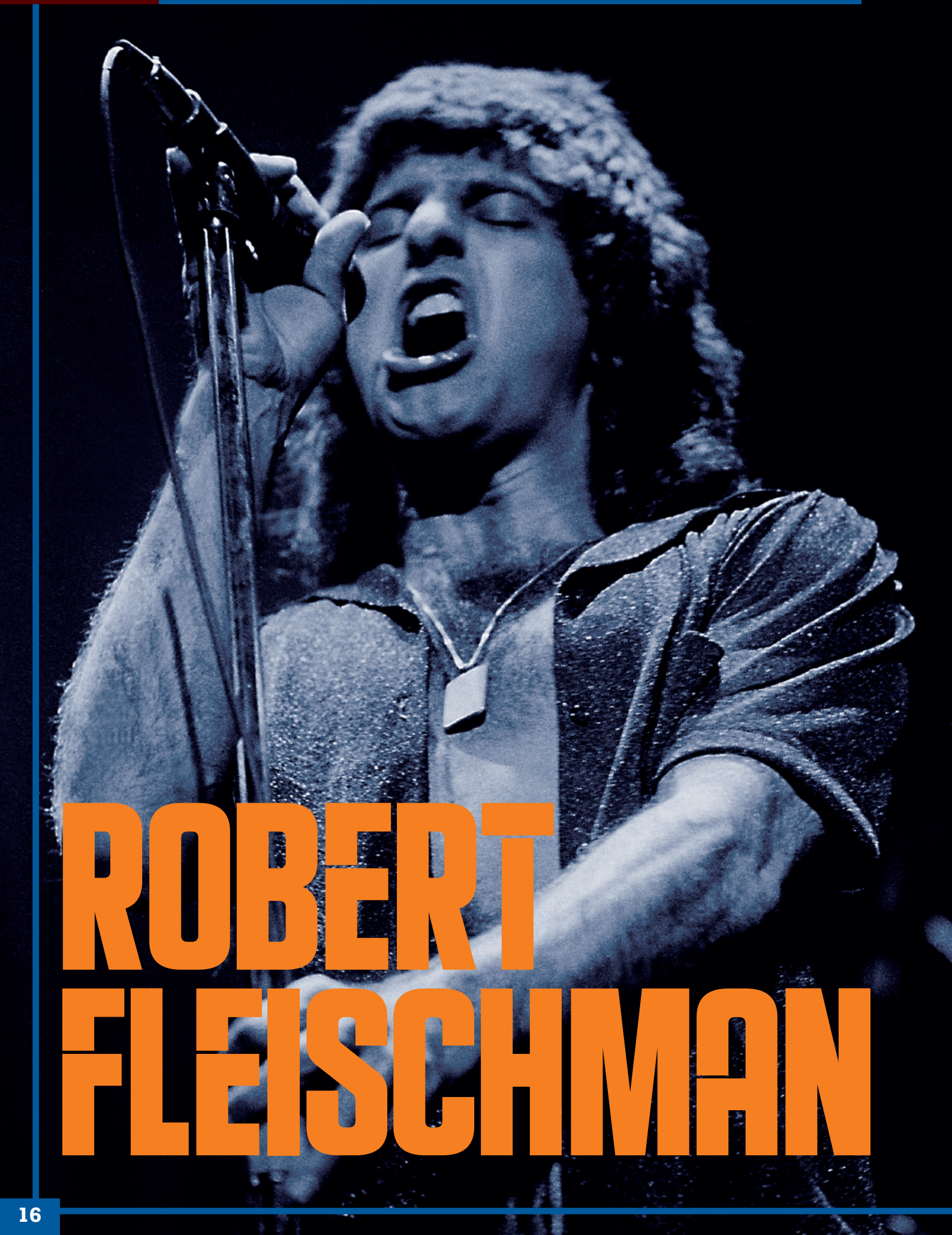
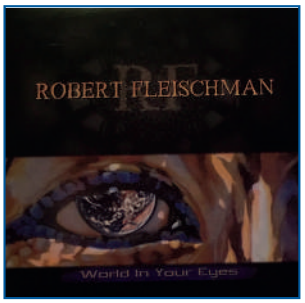
ROCK CANDY SALUTES THE MOVERS AND SHAKERS WHO DO THINGS DIFFERENTLY...



ROBERT FLEISCHMAN

IF THERE WAS EVER a sliding doors moment in rock it was surely the one when vocalist Robert Fleischman left Journey in 1977 to be replaced by Steve Perry. The whole world of rock could have been changed forever had that one moment not happened. Would the San Francisco band have managed to bust out of the commercial rut they found themselves in at the time and go on to become AOR superstars? Would 'Don't Stop Believin'' have become a signature tune for people who refuse to give up on their dreams after featuring in TV show *Glee*, and become the biggest-selling digital download of the 20th century? We'll never know. But what is certain is that while Perry is now revered as one of rock's vocal greats, Fleischman remains a relatively obscure singer, known primarily to hardcore rock enthusiasts.

Not that the 68-year-old, who started out fronting an LA band called Staggerwing, hasn't enjoyed a long, fulfilling, and interesting musical career. It's true that the five months he spent with Journey between June and October of 1977 still cast the longest shadow. But since that time Fleischman has released six solo albums (the last one back in 2007), fronted former Kiss guitarist Vinnie Vincent's Invasion, and scored soundtracks for film and TV, including work on the popular series *That '70s Show* and, perhaps most importantly of all, the pilot episode of *SpongeBob SquarePants*!



FLEISCHMAN IS blessed with the kind of voice that doesn't come around too often. His range is huge and his tone sounds like it was tailor made for late-'70s US radio. No wonder, then, that he's been in demand since the get-go. In 1975, two years before his time with Journey, Robert was asked to try out for Genesis after Peter Gabriel left the band. "I couldn't fill Peter's shoes back then," he admitted. "He was a much deeper person that I was at that time."

Journey was a very different proposition to Genesis, though, especially given the metamorphosis the band was undergoing when Fleischman joined. After three albums of what the singer calls "this rock fusion thing" the band was trying to reinvent itself as a more commercial proposition. Fleischman was a big part of that initial attempt and remembers being flipped the bird by hardcore noodle fanatics at early Journey shows. Nevertheless, Fleischman worked on songs, three of which – 'Anytime', 'Wheel In The Sky', and 'Winds Of March' – would appear on the band's breakthrough album 'Infinity'. But by the time the album was released on 20 January 1978 Fleischman had already been replaced by Steve Perry.

"There was a guy called Michael Dilbeck who worked in A&R for Columbia," Fleischman told the *Kiki Classic Rock* show on YouTube. "He was already putting money into Steve Perry, paying for demos and what have you. Dilbeck came in to see [Journey manager] Herbie Herbert and said, 'If you take Steve as your singer I'll give you more budget, more recording and more tour support.' What was Herbie going to do? He didn't care about my situation with the band."

Fleischman claims that the other group members were mad at Herbie for a while after Perry was brought in, with keyboardist Gregg Rolie telling him that "He didn't want a crooner in Journey. He wanted a screamer."

Of course it's hard to argue that the choice to dispense with Fleischman was the wrong one, given the incredible success Journey enjoyed with Perry. Only one Journey song featuring Fleischman has appeared to date, but 'For You' – a great tune released on 1992's 'Time^3' box set – does tantalisingly lift the veil on what might have been had that sliding doors moment not happened.

FLEISCHMAN MAY have been forced out of Journey, but his stock as a singer remained high within the music industry. A 1979 solo album, 'Perfect Stranger', appeared on Arista, with contributions from soon-to-be Aerosmith guitarist Jimmy Crespo, Fleetwood Mac bassist John McVie, and his old Journey mates Gregg Rolie and guitarist Neal Schon. Then renowned A&R man John Kalodner tried to hook Robert up with Michael Schenker, but Fleischman called a two-hour rehearsal with the German guitarist around 1982 "a nightmare." A try-out with Asia didn't work out either. Nor did something with members of Foghat. Robert eventually made a great album with the band Channel in 1984 (available from our sister label Rock Candy Records), then ended up working with former Kiss guitarist Vinnie Vincent, appearing on the 'Vinnie Vincent Invasion' debut album in 1986.

Once again, though, Fleischman didn't last long. A contract dispute saw him leave the band early in the album's lifespan. His replacement, Mark Slaughter, appeared in a video for the song 'Boyz Are Gonna Rock' lip-synching to Fleischman's vocal performance.

Fleischman and Vincent reunited in the '90s and the pair released a four-track EP, 'Euphoria', under the name Vinnie Vincent in 1996. But that didn't work out either and since then Fleischman has concentrated on solo work, the most Journey-like of which was a 2002 album 'World In Your Eyes'. It's not a record the singer is proud of.

"The label, Frontiers, asked me to make a record for them, and then tried to force me into doing something that sounded like Journey," he told *Kiki Classic Rock*. "I wasn't into that, so they took my recordings and gave them to [former Hurricane singer and current Foreigner frontman] Kelly Hansen, who was producing – and Kelly did all sorts of things to them, things I didn't like. I walked away and told them to shove it. I didn't care for Kelly for a long time, but in the end I let it go."

NOWADAYS ROBERT Fleischman is living in Wisconsin and working as an artist, though he's still thinking about music too. He's been approached by a conductor with a view to being recorded and filmed in front of a local orchestra performing songs from his lengthy career. And while he claims not be keen on touring, Robert *is* interested in making another record. He says he has 19 songs that he believes are good enough to form an album. And we at *Rock Candy Mag* would love to hear more from one of rock's most under-appreciated vocalists.

Words: Howard Johnson. Photo: Getty Images/Paul Natkin

CLASSIC ALBUM SLEEVE

The Almighty line-up that recorded 'Blood, Fire & Love'. L-R: Ricky Warwick (vocals and rhythm guitar), Floyd London (bass), Tantrum (lead guitar), Stump Munroe (drums)

THE ALMIGHTY
'BLOOD, FIRE & LOVE'
DATELINE: 1989

Artist, tattooist, writer and poet **Joolz Denby** on the fascinating history of the 'Blood, Fire & Love' sleeve she designed for **The Almighty**...

"RICKY WARWICK IS ONE of the nicest men in the world. He's a really decent bloke, and I can't say that about all the rock stars I know. I first got to know him when he was playing in New Model Army in 1987, but when he moved on to form The Almighty in 1988 we stayed in touch. The Almighty was a very different band to NMA, more American good-time music. Ricky was very into the rock image and artwork, and when the band were working on their debut album he asked me if I'd like to do the cover.

"RICKY TOLD me he wanted a Hells Angels style piece. I'd been married to a member of a biker gang, Satan's Slaves, which I think is one of the reasons why he asked me. He maybe thought I'd bring a certain authenticity to the work. But I told him he shouldn't do it, because he'd get into a lot of trouble with the Angels if he did.

"I think he was disappointed, because he was young and headstrong. I guess he thought the bikers would see a cover like that as a tribute or compliment. I told him I didn't think they'd see it that way at all. Eventually he came round to the idea that we should do something that looked like the Angels colours, but was *not* the same.

"I NEVER had anything to do with the record company on this project. I don't even remember what the label was. I only dealt with Ricky and the band's manager. Before I started work I spent a lot of time walking, which is where I begin to order ideas in my head. I started disassembling the elements of the Hells Angels logo into its component parts, the basic elements of a skull and wings, and working out what I could do with them without infringing on their 'copyright'.

"WHEN I started work I sat on my sofa in the house I'm still in today, with all my art materials at my feet. I used chalk pastel, which was my preferred medium to work in, and just started drawing. Everything was created by hand, which is why the artwork looks like a human being did it. Most rock covers at that time were done by the record company's in-house art department and had a very graphic feel. The Almighty sleeve didn't. The work took me no more than 24 hours. I'm well known for being quick, but you have to remember I do a lot of thinking before I ever put my hand on the paper. It's all in the preparation.

"ONCE I'D finished the piece I was convinced I'd shifted things far enough away from the Hells Angels thing that it wouldn't be a problem. But not long after that, I got a phone call from a representative of the UK Hells Angels asking questions about the sleeve. I explained that I'd been married to a member of a biker gang myself, so I understood what they were talking about, and that they should know that I wasn't doing anything that was an insult. In the end they accepted my argument.

"I HAVE no idea what the record company thought of the sleeve. I never heard anything from them. I can't remember if I got paid, but I'm assuming I did. What I do know is that Ricky would definitely have said thank you, because he had such good manners.

"WHAT I like about this album cover is that it tells a story that's much deeper than a simple piece of artwork. I think it reveals a strong woman in a very male environment trying to protect the interests of someone who wasn't fully aware of the biker world that existed outside the world of rock music. The cover artwork is definitely not the same as the Hells Angels insignia. I made sure of that, so I'm glad they accepted my point of view in the end."

Check out all of Joolz Denby's varied work at www.joolzdenby.co.uk

Photo: IconicPix/Ray Palmer Archive; pic courtesy of Joolz Denby

"Nobody provided me with a logo for this piece, so I must have made this typography up. It's somewhere between tattoo style lettering and the Hells Angels embroidery. I would have got the inspiration for this from the fact that I worked as a 'drawer on' at a tattoo studio in the '70s. I've never done a proper band logo in my life, though, because I'm not a graphic artist. I would simply have provided a drawing."

"The markings on the headband aren't symbols, they're patterns. They're based on Native American beadwork designs that you might see on moccasins and the like. I always have a stock of ideas at the back of my brain that are stored from things that I've read. I'm a huge researcher."

"I think it was my idea to do the overall design as a circle. At least, I can't remember anyone else saying that was something they specifically wanted."

"I deliberately left a gap between the top and the bottom 'rockers' [the curved typography at the top and bottom of the logo] to distinguish the piece from anything that could be associated with the Hells Angels. If I'd put something in there, then it might have echoed the MC [motorcycle club] patch that appears there on the Hells Angels design, and I definitely didn't want that."

"It seems like almost every skull I've ever done has had vampire teeth. I still do it now and I don't really know why, because I'm not a crazy gothic vampire person at all. I think there's something about the shape that appeals to me. The thing is, though, for me the teeth are more like animal's teeth, so my vampire teeth obsession is actually a canine teeth obsession."

"At the time I did this piece I used to have masses of red hair – like fire. I liked the idea of there being something massive behind the skull. It might be a shock of hair, it might be a headdress, but I knew something of that shape would work. The beadwork at the end of, we'll call it the headdress, has got a Native American, tribal thing going on. I used to make my own beadwork on a loom. It was popular at the time."

"The tribal thing again. They're like tassels, really. If you imagined all of these elements as real artefacts, then this would be a leather necklace with beads on it and feather tassels at the ends. I got the inspiration for this from Vivienne Westwood's work in the punk days, because she used a lot of this type of detail, scarves that were finished with tassels and the like. I always liked anything on a costume that created movement, especially on stage clothes."

"I had nothing to do with the album title typography. Maybe somebody showed it to me at the time, but I don't really remember. I don't mind it, though. It's not offensive in any way."

THE ALMIGHTY – 'BLOOD, FIRE & LOVE'

Released: 1989 Album length: 45:14 Produced by John Williams Engineered and mixed by John Jacobs
Recorded and mixed at Air Studios, London; Abbey Road Studios 2, London; and Sawmills Studio, Cornwall

1. Resurrection Mutha (4.56) – Ricky Warwick, Tantrum
2. Destroyed (3.43) – Ricky Warwick
3. Wild & Wonderful (4.59) – Ricky Warwick, Floyd London
4. Blood, Fire & Love (5.46) – Ricky Warwick
5. Gift Horse (3.39) – Ricky Warwick
6. You've Gone Wild (3.58) – Ricky Warwick
7. Lay Down The Law (4.02) – Ricky Warwick, Tantrum
8. Power (3.59) – Ricky Warwick
9. Full Force Lovin' Machine (3.45) – Ricky Warwick, Tantrum, Floyd London, Stump Munroe
10. Detroit (3.24) – Ricky Warwick
11. New Love Sensation (3.03) – Ricky Warwick

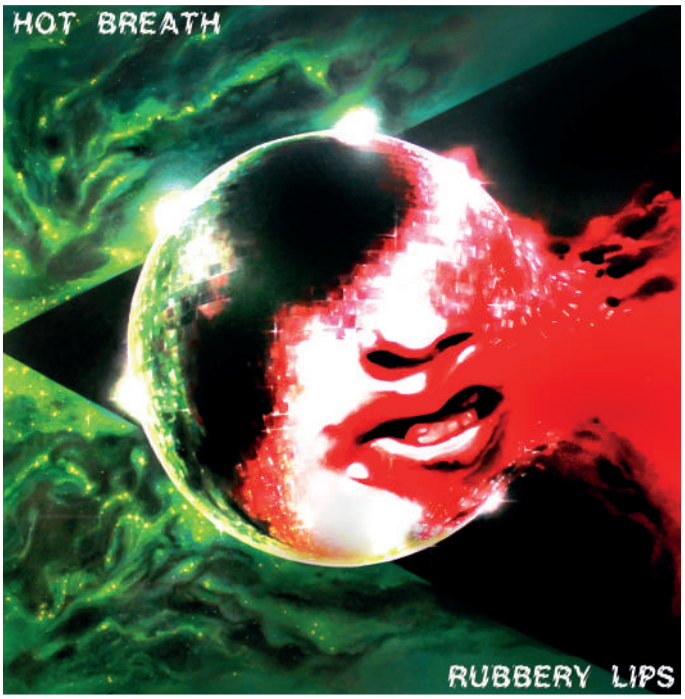
LINE UP:
Ricky Warwick – vocals, rhythm and acoustic guitar
Tantrum – lead and rhythm guitar, backing vocals
Stump Munroe – drums and percussion, backing vocals
Floyd London – bass and acoustic guitar, backing vocals

INTRODUCING...

GREAT BANDS YOU MIGHT HAVE MISSED

HOT BREATH

WHAT'S THE DEFINITION OF garage rock? Well, to avoid a long-winded explanation, why not just search out the debut album by Swedish upstarts Hot Breath, nattily titled 'Rubbery Lips'? The first two bars of opening track 'Right Time' will answer the question definitively. It sounds like a volcano erupting in your face as a pulsating throb of swashbuckling guitars provides a rush of power that is absolutely transfixing. Remember when instructions on fireworks used to say 'light the blue touch paper and stand well back'? That's exactly the warning Hot Breath should hand out with their album.



SO YOU'VE got the vibe even before the vocals kick in. But the party really starts when vocalist Jennifer 'Jenna' Israelsson jabs and spits out the lyrics like a woman who's not only in total command, but is also utterly unimpeachable. Weirdly, her voice sounds not a million miles removed from Geddy Lee or even Budgie's Burke Shelley. It's been a long time since I've heard someone with this kind of commitment to the cause. And unlike, say, Plasmatics' Wendy O. Williams, Jenna can carry a tune, an asset that will surely allow the band to reach a larger audience. Her physical stance is right up front too. With legs firmly astride like Lemmy, and guitar – yes, she also plays guitar – at 45 degrees, this lady is indisputably ready to rock. Let's just say I wouldn't want to get on her bad side!

TO BE fair, Jenna's not the only one can step up to the plate and intimidate. Lead guitarist Karl Edfeldt definitely has the swagger and chops to punch through, sounding like a potent combination of MC5's Fred 'Sonic' Smith and The Stooges' Ron Asheton on steroids and fighting their way out of a 1967 Detroit police siege. Indeed, the Detroit connection is perfectly apt. Hot Breath's raw sound convincingly evokes those two late '60s bands, while also tapping into the more mainstream hard rock provided

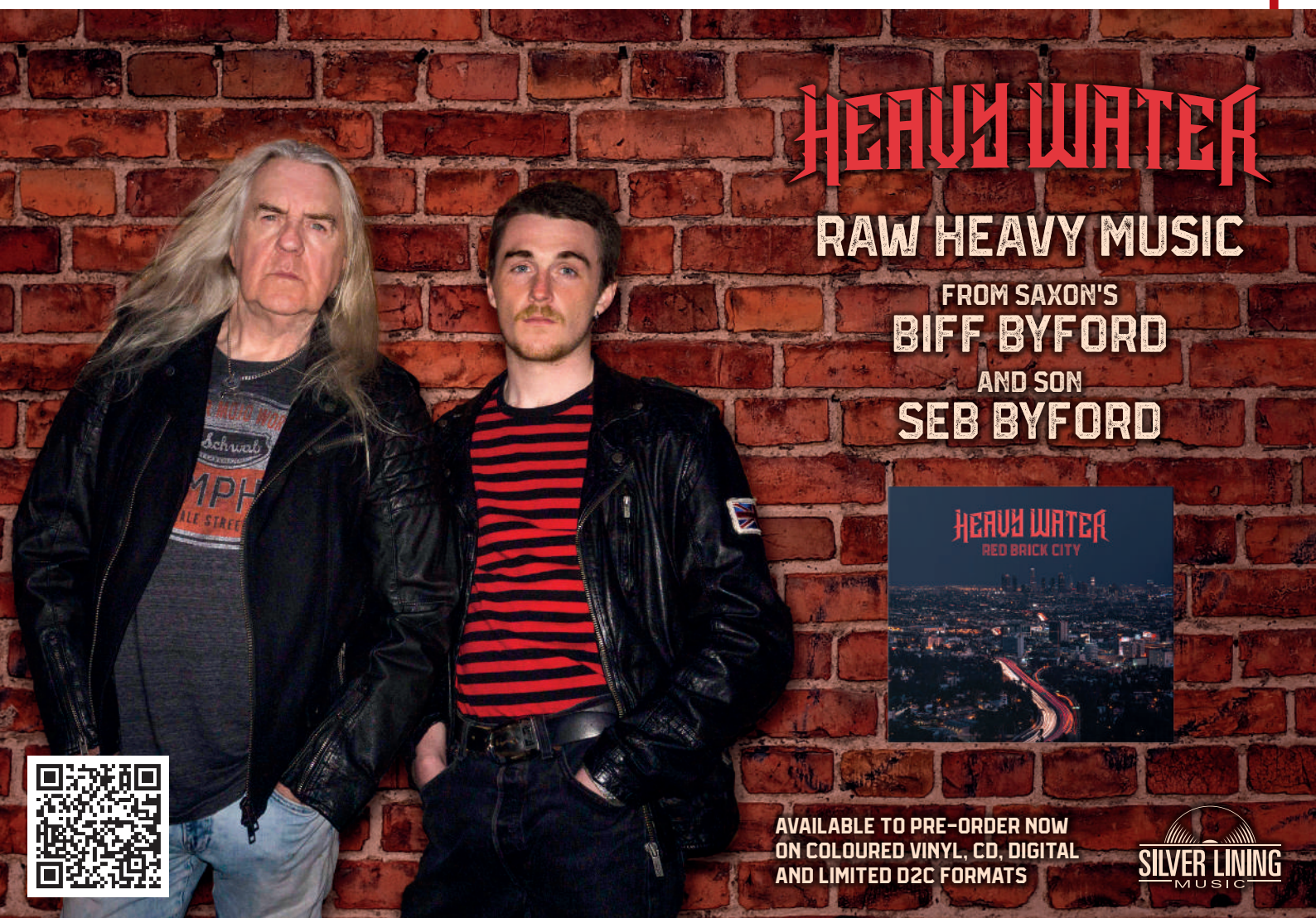
Words: Derek Oliver: Photos: Anders Bergstedt

by Motörhead, Hanoi Rocks, early G N' R, The Hives, and Foo Fighters. If the Sex Pistols forged the path linking garage rock to heavy metal, then Hot Breath are natural successors. And don't go away thinking these kids are a flash-in-the-pan, hip-to-the-trip modern alt-rock sensation. This four-piece has all eight feet firmly planted in the solid foundations of the grittiest hard rock originators, yet without any copycat moves that might otherwise spoil their progress.

Hot Breath L-R: Karl Edfeldt (guitar), Anton Frick Kallmin (bass), Jenna Israelsson (vocals and guitar), Jimmy Karlsson (drums)

ONE OF the best things about Hot Breath is their penchant for humour. It's not silly or slapstick, though. More a knowing nod and a wink to the inherent absurdity of bestial riffage. If you check out the band's videos on YouTube you'll get the idea. 'Bad Feeling' features close-up headshots depicting mischievous shenanigans with facial tics a-plenty. 'Right Time' shows the band members ripping through the track and really confronting the camera just as Motörhead used to. And finally there's the highly enjoyable cartoon romp of 'What You're Looking For, I've Already Found'. All of this shows a band that isn't afraid to open up and say, "Look, we're not a one-dimensional proposition. We do understand where we come from and we know where we're heading." The humour is refreshing, but not for one moment does it feel like it's being used to manipulate anything. It's just a true reflection of the band members' individual personalities.

JENNA AND drummer Jimmy Karlsson were previously in a band called Honeymoon Disease. But Hot Breath, completed by Edfeldt and bassist Anton Frick Kallmin, came together in October of 2018. A six-track EP, 'Hot Breath', was released the following year, with the glory that is 'Rubbery Lips' dropping in April of this year. The band have already blown dozens of speakers and wrecked a few rehearsal rooms, so they're looking forward to destroying out on the road when the pandemic is finally in retreat. When they do get to perform I can guarantee that I'll be in the audience, as close to the front as my fat face will allow.



DARK DAYS

The Helloween line-up that recorded the 'Pink Bubbles Go Ape' album. Clockwise from top left: Michael Weikath (guitar), Roland Grapow (guitar), Markus Grosskopf (bass), Ingo Schwichtenberg (drums), Michael Kiske (vocals)

When The Bubble Burst

At the start of the '90s, and with German power metallers **Helloween** signed to a major record label and a respected management company, the band could have been forgiven for thinking they were on their way to the top. So why did the 1991 'Pink Bubbles Go Ape' album fail to do the business? *Malcolm Dome* gets the inside story from guitarist **Michael Weikath** and vocalist **Michael Kiske.**

IT'S EASY TO FORGET just how popular German outfit Helloween were early on in their career. Two consecutive albums on German label Noise – 1987's 'Keeper Of The Seven Keys: Part I' and its follow-up a year later, 'Keeper Of The Seven Keys: Part II' – were credited with creating the power metal sub-genre, while an opening slot at the prestigious 1988 Monsters Of Rock festival in England brought the band to a worldwide audience. What's more, the five-piece from Hamburg then signed a management contract with the all-powerful Sanctuary organisation, home of Iron Maiden, and inked a major label deal with EMI. It looked as if Helloween had all the building blocks in place for a stellar '90s career. But that's not how things worked out...

Behind the scenes things weren't quite as peachy as the headlines might have had you believe. Helloween were attempting to record their fourth studio album – their first for EMI – while engaging in serious legal tussles with Noise. And they were also trying to put 'Pink Bubbles Go Ape' together without founder member and linchpin Kai Hansen. The guitarist and vocalist ducked out of Helloween in 1989, citing all of ill health, dissatisfaction with touring, conflicts within the band, and issues with Noise as his reasons for going. Hansen's guitar partner Michael Weikath explains that Hansen's departure had been a long time coming.

"We already knew during the recording of 'Keeper Of The Seven Keys: Part II' in May and June of '88 that Kai wanted to go," says Weikath. "The only question was whether he'd leave after the album was finished, or whether he'd fulfil some touring commitments we already had in support of the record. Eventually we agreed that he'd do the European leg of the tour and we'd replace him for Japanese dates and American shows."

"Kai had been talking about leaving for ages," confirms the band's vocalist at the time, Michael Kiske. "I could tell that he wasn't happy and it was all getting too much for him. But I never thought he'd actually leave. I tried to talk him out of it, but when Kai left everything changed. Everything turned from white to black. The spirit went out of the band and it all blew up in our faces."

Former Rampage guitarist Roland Grapow joined the Helloween line up of Weikath, Kiske, bassist Markus Grosskopf, and drummer Ingo Schwichtenberg.

"He was the only person I considered for the job," explains Weikath. "I'd seen Roland playing in a club in Hamburg and thought he was a German version of Brian May. He had a lot of US influences. You could hear REO Speedwagon, Toto, and Chicago in what he was playing, so Roland definitely brought that American melodic appeal to what we were doing in Helloween."

"Weiki was the one pulling the strings in the band at the time," says Kiske. "He was the one who brought Roland in. There were never any discussions about it, and suddenly Roland was there."

CHANGES WERE afoot in other departments too. The band had struck up a close relationship with producer Tommy Hansen on both 'Keeper...' albums, but a bigger name was in the frame for the band's first major label album release. Chris Tsangarides had an impressive pedigree, having worked with Gary Moore, Thin Lizzy, and Judas Priest. But Weikath remembers there being resistance to Tsangarides from within Helloween.

"It was our manager Rod Smallwood's idea," he says. "I can remember him going down on his knees in front of us begging us to go with Chris, telling us he'd be so much better for the band than Tommy. I was against the idea and wanted to stick with Tommy, but was outvoted by the rest of the guys. Chris had just produced Judas Priest's 'Painkiller' album, though it had only just come out and hadn't really made its mark. But he

Photo: IconicPix/George Chin

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had produced Thin Lizzy's 'Thunder And Lightning' album back in 1983, and that was an important factor in convincing the other guys that he was the right choice for us."

"While I was finishing recording 'Painkiller' in 1990 I received a phone call from my manager, Ralph Simon," Tsangarides told me in 2016, two years before his untimely death at the age of just 61. "He asked me if I'd like to work with Helloween on their new album. I liked their 'Keeper' albums and the guys in Priest said I should do it because they were a good band. So I agreed."

Weikath's view now is that Sanctuary were keen to get Tsangarides in place because it would allow them more control.

"Rod knew that if he told Chris something should be changed in the sound or mix, then Chris would do it. But Tommy was stubborn, and probably would have argued as to why it should remain as it was. A lot of what went wrong wasn't down to Chris, but he wasn't the right producer for the band. We'd always go into the studio with Tommy with songs that weren't quite finished, and then work with him to mould them until they were right. But Chris was totally different. He was used to bands coming in with the songs all worked out. All he'd need to do was get the right sounds. It was a very different philosophy and it didn't suit us.

"We'd done some pre-production for the album, but not with Chris. I think we met him only once before we went into the studio. We turned up with songs that we'd demoed, but they weren't fully structured. We expected Chris to help us flesh them out, but he said we should go away and get them ready ourselves. Pre-production wasn't what he did. So we were wary of him. Chris wasn't prepared to do anything on the creative side. Rod should have known this would happen. He should have realised Chris wasn't the man for us."

Michael Kiske agrees with Weikath that Tsangarides was the wrong man for the job.

"Rod meant well by bringing him in," he tells me. "But it didn't work out. We were so used to Tommy Hansen and he was never afraid to try new things, even if they seemed mad. He was adventurous and we always had fun with him.

"Right from the start Chris had an idea in his head of what a metal record should sound like, and he wouldn't shift from that. The creativity seemed to have gone from the process. All we really did was re-record demos that we'd already done, and that was pretty soul destroying."

"We didn't do any pre-production as such," confirmed Tsangarides. "They had their songs written, so we went into a rehearsal studio in Hamburg and I recorded the tunes live on to my DAT player for reference. We drove to the studio the next day."

Vocalist Michael Kiske (left) fooling around with original guitarist Kai Hansen in happier times

THE STUDIO that had been chosen for the recording of the album, PUK in Denmark, also proved to be a bone of contention.

"Some of the guys in the band were seduced by the idea of going there, because it had been used by some major bands," sighs Weikath. "And we saw ourselves as on the verge of becoming big time. It was a state-of-the-art studio with a sauna, a swimming pool, nice apartments... everything a rock star could wish for. I think that's what we thought we were at the time. But I wasn't convinced. The studio was in the middle of nowhere, so if you wanted to go to the nearest town, a place called Randers, it would cost you what would now be about 100 euros in a taxi. And Randers was a tough place. If you went to the local disco there'd be a bunch of thugs hanging around, ready to beat you up because they didn't like the way you looked. The Sisters Of Mercy were in PUK at the same time as us [working on their 1990 album 'Vision Thing'], and one time I went into Randers with [Sisters guitarist] Andreas Bruhn. Those guys really took against him and we had to smuggle him out of the club we were in."

Weikath also has suspicions that there were far more serious issues surrounding the studio.

"The place was surrounded by fields of wheat," he

Photos: IconicPix/Pete Cronin; IconicPix/George Chin

explains. “And these fields were sprayed with pesticide. I wouldn’t be surprised if some of that stuff got into the studio. I know other musicians who worked at PUK complained that they weren’t right there at all, and I think that could have been down to the spraying in the fields.”

Tsangarides claimed it was Michael Kiske who wanted to record at PUK. “Michael wasn’t a fan of anything old,” he said. “Buildings or studios. PUK was very modern. I thought it was a great place to record.”

“My choice?” asks Kiske incredulously. “I would never have presumed to suggest we should go to any particular studio, and I’d never even heard of PUK.”

DISCUSSING THE personalities in the band, Tsangarides claimed all members were “very affable when I met them. I struck up friendships with Ingo and Markus in particular. Roland was new and finding his place within the band, and then there were the two Michaels, who were both trying to figure out where they stood after Kai’s departure.

“I was struck by the fact that as a band they didn’t really collaborate with each other. If Michael Kiske wrote something, then it would be done exactly as he wanted and no one else could change anything. So we had three writers – the two Michaels and Roland – with five songs each that we had to work with. I don’t think that made the album very focused, song-wise, and that was one of the reasons why ‘Pink Bubbles Go Ape’ didn’t turn out to be as heavy as I thought it should have been.”

> “WE WERE IN A LOT OF DEBT BEFORE SANCTUARY TOOK US ON, AND THE ONLY WAY WE BELIEVED WE COULD GET OUT OF DEBT WAS BY GOING A LOT MORE COMMERCIAL.”
> **MICHAEL WEIKATH**

“That’s a little unfair,” disputes Kiske. “Everybody had an input into how a song should be done, but the writer did have the final say, as was their right.”

Tsangarides wanted the album to be heavier, leading to the inclusion of the controversial ‘Heavy Metal Hamsters’.

“That was supposed to be a single B-side,” recalls Weikath. “But Chris insisted that there wasn’t enough heavy stuff on the record, and persuaded us to put it on. He was right about the lack of heaviness, but that was because we now saw ourselves as more of a pop or rock band than a metal band. We had to make the change for financial reasons. We were in a lot of debt before Sanctuary took us on, and the only way we believed

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we could get out of debt was by going a lot more commercial on that album.

"'Heavy Metal Hamsters' was totally misunderstood. We wrote it about ourselves, about the way we were behaving like rock stars. It was supposed to be humorous, but the humour got lost somewhere along the way. It didn't help when the lyrics were printed on the sleeve and the line '*Contracts, PDs, nose bikes, and TV shows*' came out as '*Contracts, PDs, nose bags, and TV shows*.' The term 'nose bikes' was referring to us wearing sunglasses, but that was totally missed."

"We definitely had a sense of humour," says Kiske. "We took our music seriously, but there was a certain comic-strip mentality in the band as well. Yet Chris had this unshakable attitude about what a metal album *should* be like. He didn't seem to get our silliness. I think he wanted 'Heavy Metal Hamsters' on the album because it had the words 'heavy' and 'metal' in the title!"

"FOR A LONG TIME 'PINK BUBBLES GO APE' WAS AN ALBUM I JUST WANTED TO FORGET AND NEVER TALK ABOUT. WE MADE SO MANY BAD ERRORS DURING THAT PERIOD. WE HAD A DIFFERENT GUITARIST, A DIFFERENT PRODUCER, AND A DIFFERENT SOUND. IT WAS ALL WRONG. THE SPIRIT WE'D ONCE HAD AS A BAND HAD GONE."
MICHAEL KISKE

THIS KIND of misunderstanding between band and producer meant time in the studio became fraught.

"Things got very heated between us and Chris and we had a lot of angry exchanges," says Weikath. "Things did get personal, which I now regret, of course. It also didn't help that Chris insisted on us using Hi Watt amps in the studio and not the amps we wanted. We couldn't get the sounds we were used to having when working with Tommy."

Weikath is also big enough to admit that Tsangarides' CV intimidated him.

"I remember sitting in the studio with my guitar in hand, ready to record," he says. "And all I could think was, 'This guy's worked with [Thin Lizzy guitarist] John Sykes!' That wasn't Chris's fault, but maybe I was too scared to play the way I really wanted."

The overall tensions were starting to impact on the band's inter-personal relationships as well.

"We were falling out among ourselves," Weikath admits. "Our drummer Ingo really hated a song I wrote called 'Number One', because he thought it was too commercial. Then Michael Kiske had his girlfriend with him, which made the rest of us pretty wary. He'd also become a vegetarian and had got into religion, which caused some issues. All of this led to us sort of checking out a bit. Whatever the reasons, I do remember that once we'd finished recording Michael said that maybe it would be best to leave Chris alone to get on with the job of mixing."

HELLOWEEN HAD carved out a niche as proudly-European power metallers. All of a sudden they were shifting the musical goalposts, and the weird title they gave to their new album only served to emphasise this stylistic change.

"Kiske called me one day and said that after the success of the two 'Keeper...' albums we could now do whatever we wanted. So why not go crazy and call the album something daft like 'Pink Bubbles'? I said we could go further and call it 'Pink Bubbles Go Ape'. Everyone liked it, so it stuck."

With such a weird title in place for the album there was surely only one company in the frame to create appropriately surreal artwork, and that was Hipgnosis, the design agency that had created some of the most iconic rock album imagery, from Pink Floyd and Led Zeppelin, through to Scorpions and UFO.

"I approached Hipgnosis to see if they were interested," reveals Weikath. "We'd seen what they'd done for all those bands we looked up to. We believed that our album was going to be hugely successful and would put us into the same league as those acts.

"What [Hipgnosis main man] Storm Thorgerson came up with for us was unique. In my opinion you never question the work someone like Storm creates. After all, he was album artwork royalty. But one or two guys in the band *did* question what Storm gave us, so he walked out. That's just the way he was. Thankfully we got him back by agreeing to go with whatever he wanted without trying to analyse it.

"Some of our fans moaned about the artwork, because they didn't understand it. And they didn't like the fact there were no pumpkins on it. The pumpkins had pretty much become synonymous with the band."

"Rod Smallwood pushed for us to use Storm

Photos: IconicPix/George Bodnar Archive; IconicPix/Ray Palmer Archive

Thorgerson," says Michael Kiske. "In theory there was nothing wrong with working with him, but I never liked what he did for us. It was too much of a departure from what we'd had before." (*Ed's note – "I have to disagree with Kiske's assessment here. 'Pink Bubbles Go Ape' is a legendary piece of album art, primarily because I was the man in the gorilla suit you can see at the end of the hallway on the cover!"*)

ISSUES WITH producers and album sleeves were as nothing compared to the serious business issues the band were facing at the same time, though. Ongoing litigation with Helloween's previous label, Noise, meant that 'Pink Bubbles Go Ape' wasn't released on EMI until March of 1991, almost three years after the band's last album 'Keeper of The Seven Keys: Part II'.

"We'd signed to EMI ages before," reveals Weikath. "A lawyer in Germany had told us that our contract with Noise was grossly unfair and that if the label took us to court we'd definitely win. But then the owner of Noise sued us for breach of contract. We thought he'd just accept that we wanted to get on with our career. But he didn't, and the whole thing took ages to sort out."

"It was something we as a band should never have had to deal with," shrugs Kiske. "We had our former label taking us to court, and Noise also took out an injunction that meant we weren't allowed to play live until everything was settled. It was horrible."

Under the circumstances some people might find it amazing that Helloween managed to stay together and record an album at all. With the benefit of hindsight it's easy to suggest that with all the problems they were facing the band would have been wiser to shore up their musical defences by sticking to the style they'd become revered for. Taking the musical sidestep that we heard on 'Pink Bubbles...' would have been a stretch for a band that had been sailing in calm waters, never mind one for whom the seas were undoubtedly choppy.

'Pink Bubbles Go Ape' proved to be a commercial disappointment. Whereas 'Keeper Of The Seven Keys: Part II' had gone Top Five in the band's native Germany, 'Pink Bubbles...' stalled at 32. It was the same story in the UK and the US. Fans voted with their feet and Helloween had to accept that a long hiatus and a change of direction hadn't served them well in commercial terms.

> "THE MATERIAL ON THE ALBUM WAS REALLY, REALLY GOOD. BUT IT DIDN'T QUITE COME OUT THE WAY WE HOPED. I DO WISH WE'D USED A DIFFERENT PRODUCER. IT'S A SHAME, BECAUSE HELLOWEEN WERE SO MUCH BETTER THAN ALL THE AMATEUR METAL BANDS IN GERMANY AT THE TIME!"
> **MICHAEL WEIKATH**

LISTENING BACK to 'Pink Bubbles Go Ape' now, fully 30 years later, you might be forgiven for wondering what the fuss was about. For me it's got some top class power metal tunes enhanced by a production that I for one find it hard to argue with.

"Sonically it sounded strong, and the guys were knocked out with the mixes," said Chris Tsangarides. "The individual songs were very good, but the album took the guys away from their heavy roots. That was a mistake and I told them so. I think I knew what their fans wanted."

"The material on the album was really, really good," says Michael Weikath. "But it didn't quite come out the way we hoped. I do wish we'd used a different producer. We weren't used to working the way Chris did. It's a shame, because Helloween were so much better than all the amateur metal bands in Germany at the time!"

Michael Kiske still doesn't see things that way, though.

"I can look back now and see why it all went over the edge of a cliff," he concludes. "But for a long time 'Pink Bubbles Go Ape' was an album I just wanted to forget and never talk about. We made so many bad errors during that period. We had a different guitarist, a different producer, and a different sound. It was all wrong. The spirit we'd once had as a band had gone. Chris was the wrong producer for us and what we ended up with is an album that nobody liked."

EYEWITNESS DATELINE: 1976-1977

It's revered as one of the greatest double live albums of all time – even if **Status Quo** main man Francis Rossi isn't convinced. *Dave Ling* talks to the three surviving members of 'The Frantic Four' about the making of the redoubtable 'Live!' and its place in Quo history

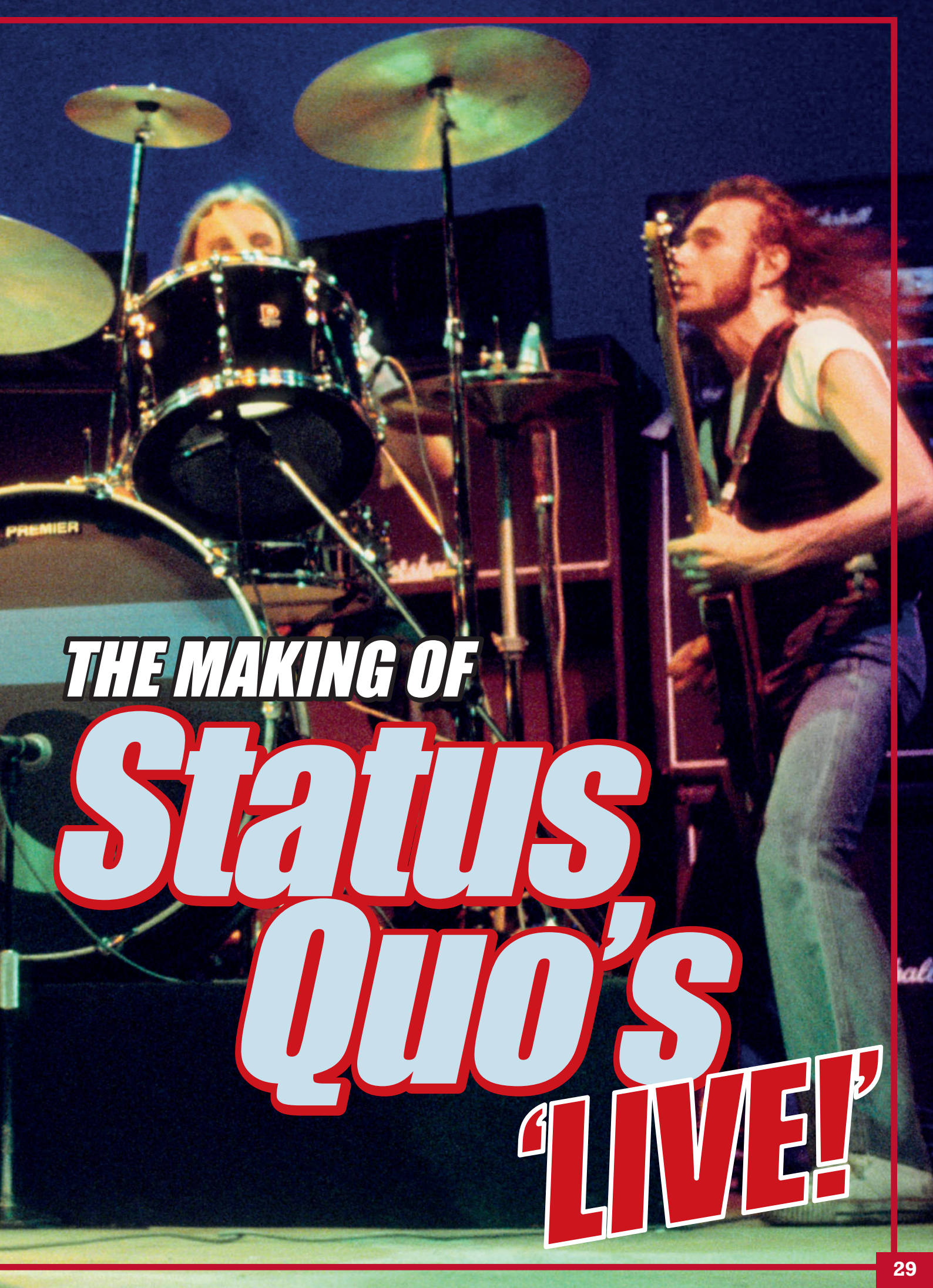
IN 1976 STATUS QUO decided that the time had come to record a live album. The previous year they'd tested the water with 'Roll Over Lay Down', the A-side of a three-song EP, titled 'Live!', recorded before audiences in Southend-on-Sea and Stoke-on-Trent that reached the Top 10. Now, nine albums into their career, and with 'Blue For You' having made it to number one in the UK album charts, Quo were going full bore. Over the course of three October nights from the 27th to the 29th the four-piece band brought their distinctive brand of high-intensity boogie to the Glasgow Apollo, an iconic 3,500-capacity venue on the city's Renfield Street. Backed by the Tartan Army, who leapt around in the aisles roaring "Quo-oh-oh-oh-oh" between each number and every lull in the music's peaks, the band were young, cocky, and at the very peak of their powers.

Released in March 1977, the double-LP 'Live!' captured core members Francis Rossi, Rick Parfitt, Alan Lancaster, and John Coghlan, together with keyboardist Andrew Bown and harmonica player/road manager Bob Young, at their absolute zenith. An off-the-cuff introduction to the couplet of 'Little Lady'/'Most Of The Time' gave birth to a cherished band nickname, The Frantic Four. And quite rightly 'Live!' is considered not only a watershed moment in Quo's history, but also one of a handful of definitive double-album concert releases alongside Thin Lizzy's 'Live And Dangerous', 'Strangers In The Night' by UFO, and Deep Purple's 'Made In Japan'. To a certain breed of diehard Quo fan, it's also the last truly great album the band made.

AND YET... the only remaining original member of the band today, lead guitarist and vocalist Francis Rossi, is highly critical of the album. Rossi alone carries the torch for the classic Quo line-up in 2021, but a few years ago he irked the band's hardcore fans by describing 'Live!' as "the worst album we ever made."

"My problem with it is the overdubs – or lack of,"

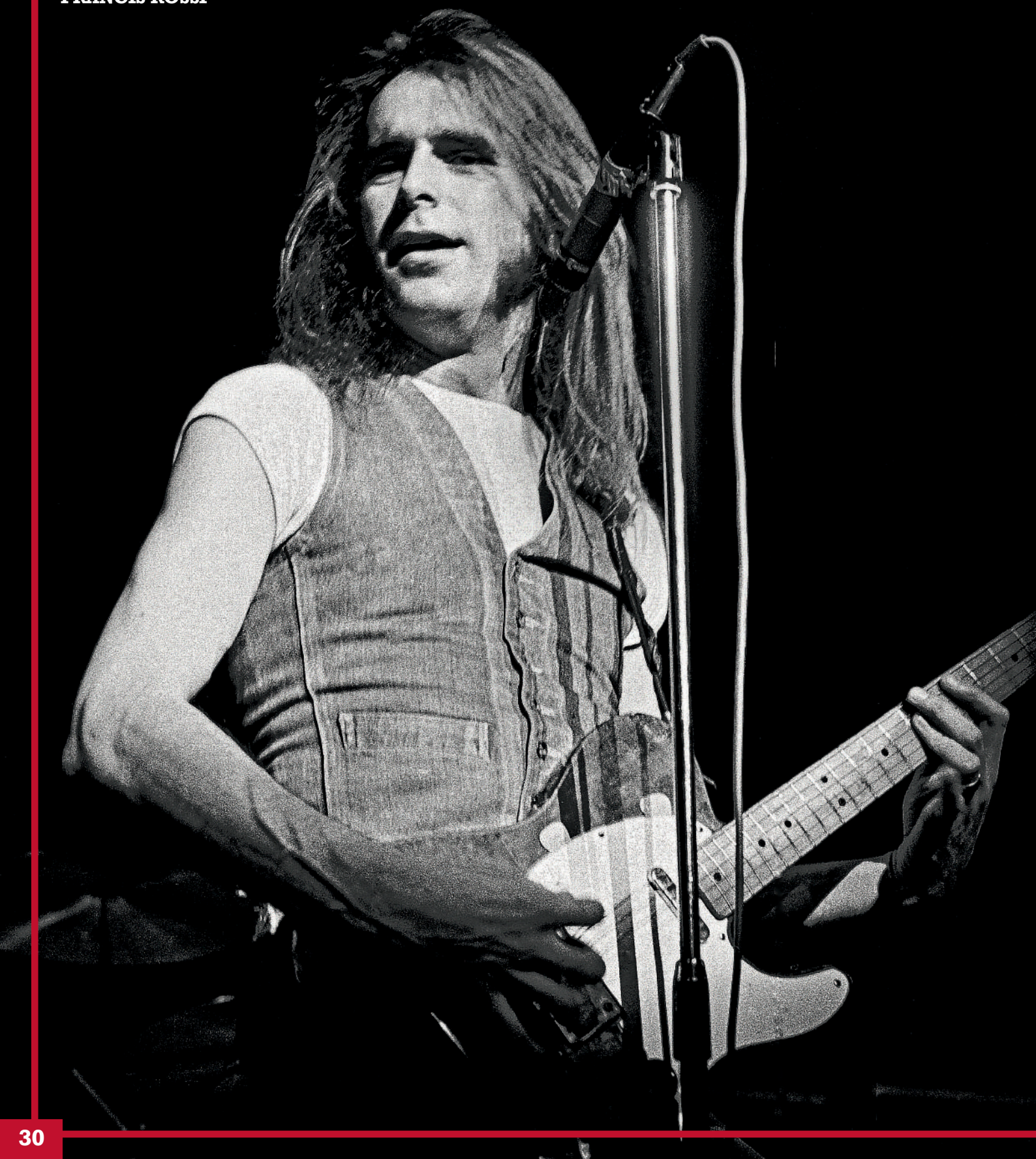
Photo: Getty Images/Gijsbert Hanekroot/Redferns



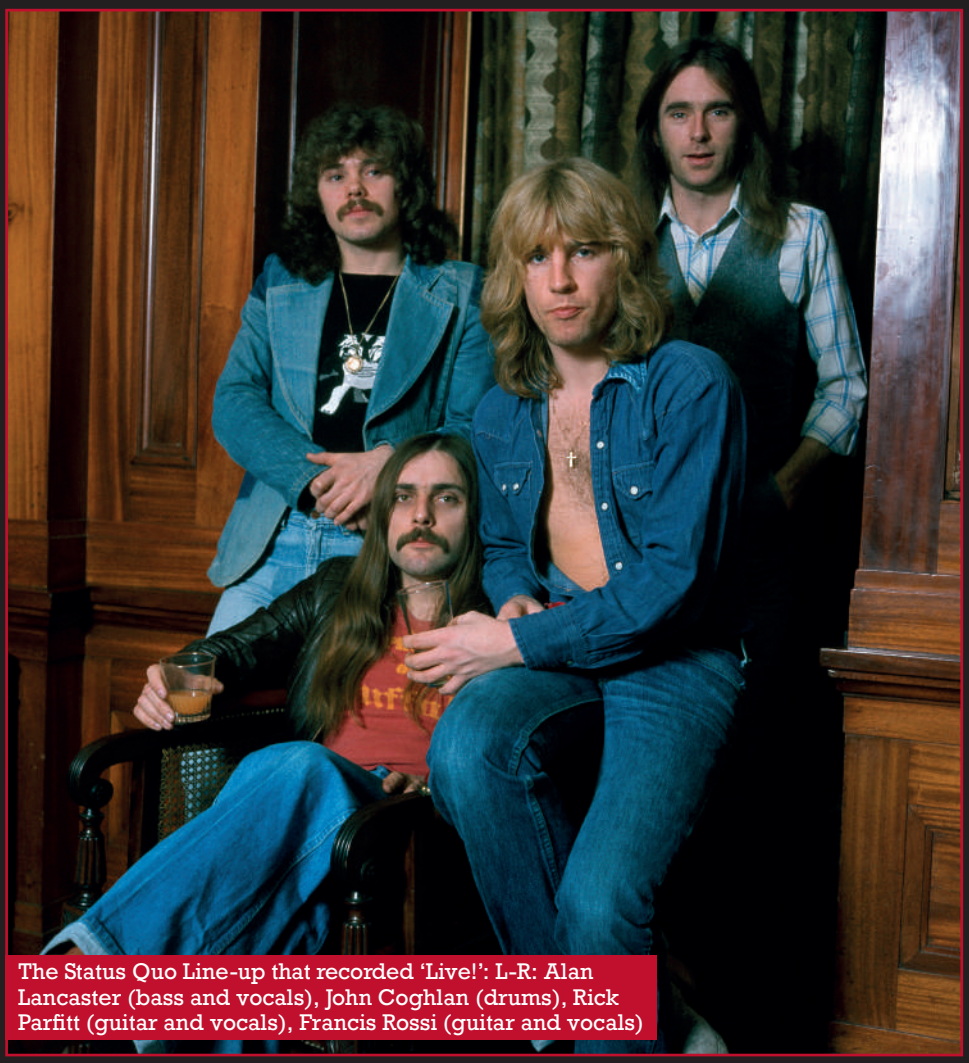
THE MAKING OF Status Quo's 'LIVE!'

EYEWITNESS DATELINE: 1976-1977

"WE RECORDED THREE NIGHTS, AND WHEN RICK AND I LISTENED BACK TO THE TAPES IT WAS PRETTY CLEAR THAT THE FINAL NIGHT WAS THE ONE. FOR SOME REASON, THOUGH, WE ENDED UP GOING WITH THE FIRST NIGHT. WE FELT THERE WAS SOMETHING ABOUT IT, BUT NOW I'M NOT SO SURE. SOME PEOPLE THINK IT'S OUR BEST ALBUM. I'M SORRY, BUT I DON'T AGREE."
FRANCIS ROSSI



Francis explains patiently. "We recorded three nights and when Rick [Parfitt, rhythm guitar and vocals] and I listened back to the tapes it was pretty clear that the final night was the one; the playing was better and it was more controlled than the rest. For some reason, though, we ended up going with the first night. We felt there was something about it, but now I'm not so sure. Just about any live album you can name has some form of overdubbing, whether it's voices or drums, and that's because the lead vocal mic often spills over into the front of house sound. At the time I thought it was to our credit that we left things exactly as they were. Now I think it was a stupid and naïve decision. Some people think it's our best album. I'm sorry, but I don't agree."



The Status Quo Line-up that recorded 'Live!': L-R: Alan Lancaster (bass and vocals), John Coghlan (drums), Rick Parfitt (guitar and vocals), Francis Rossi (guitar and vocals)

Rick Parfitt sadly died in 2016 of sepsis from a shoulder injury, but two years earlier, in an interview he gave me for the liner notes to a remastered deluxe edition of 'Live!', the guitarist and vocalist offered a very different viewpoint from Rossi.

"The 'Live!' album still gives me goosebumps," he said. "It is what it is. Let's not re-do the voices or the f*ck-ups; it's meant to be live. I love the album's rawness – and its real-ness. Yes, it's warts and all, but it's stood the test of time."

Bass player and vocalist Alan Lancaster has a very different view again.

"Nobody wanted that live album at the time," he claims. "The record company was suing us because [as a double set] it accounted for two albums instead of one, and that caused trouble. When we first listened to it we felt it didn't match our studio sound, so we didn't take much interest in it either. But over the decades we got over the hurdle [of the audio quality] and realised that the performances and the energy were what really mattered. Doing it night after night you became used to those levels, but when you listen back to it now it's really quite something."

"I'm happy that the album was left the way it was, mistakes and all," drummer John Coghlan claims. "Ask any Quo fan and they'll agree. They liked it for the rawness. To have polished it up afterwards would have made it a bit cabaret."

IN 1976, the year that 'Live!' was recorded, Quo also completed the first half of what would be a lengthy tour in support of 'Blue For You'. It included a six-week trip to the United States, where they played with Foghat, Robin Trower, Wishbone Ash, and Ted Nugent among others. The Glasgow shows were slotted in before the band flew to Japan, Australia, and New Zealand, with two planned performances selling out so quickly that a third show was added on the 29th. Ticketholders received a free sticker proclaiming "I'm On The Quo Album" while support came from Liverpool band Nutz.

"'Blue For You' was our biggest headline tour until that point," points out Bob Young, recognised at the time as the band's unofficial fifth member. "The tour started off with a couple of nights at the old Hammersmith Odeon in London, then moved on to three nights in Liverpool [at the Empire], a couple in Newcastle [at the City Hall], and three at the Apollo [in Glasgow]. There were multiple nights pretty much everywhere. Those three nights at Glasgow in March of '76 were what convinced us that the live album had to be done there. Those shows were completely mental."

"Colin Johnson [the band's manager at the time] was fully aware that Glasgow was the most raucous audience in Europe," Rossi agrees. "What made the recording special was those Jocks. What an audience they were. The vibe in that room was unique. When they took the Apollo away [the venue closed in 1985] it was very hard to play anywhere else [in Glasgow].

"The Apollo was an old-school venue," Rossi continues fondly. "When we first played there in the early 1970s the dressing rooms had no toilet or showers. There was just a jug of water and a bowl to wash yourself in."

During his 2014 interview with me Parfitt recalled that the Apollo's stage "was easily eight or nine feet tall... it was quite scary."

"The Apollo's was the highest stage I've ever known," Bob Young concurs. "Back then the Frantic Four were really frantic, and zooming around the way they did

Photos: Getty Images/Gus Stewart/Redferns; Getty Images/Jorgen Angel/Redferns

EYEWITNESS DATELINE: 1976-1977

was incredibly dangerous. We used to have a term, to 'get one's wings', which meant to trip over a wire and fall over while running around. To 'get your wings' at the Apollo, my God you were likely to roll off the edge..."

"That stage was so high you'd have thought it would have stopped fans from reaching it, but I recall one guy making it up there and being bundled off," admits Lancaster. "I was quite worried about going to the front."

ACCORDING TO legend the venue's security staff were equally formidable. "If those guys caught anyone trying to get up [on the stage] they'd take 'em out the back and kick them down five or six flights of stairs," Rossi winces. "The bouncers were particularly vicious. They'd even have beaten up the band. There was one incident when Alan pulled a bird [that had somehow displeased the bouncers] and they were waiting for us after the gig. I don't remember how we got out of that one.

"Going to Scotland could be a bit iffy," Francis continues. "We used to get paid £12 extra – danger money. No, I'm not kidding. If a Scottish audience likes you then they take you, and that's that. But if they don't..."

"Most of the bouncers we met in Scotland weren't bouncers at all, they were thugs," Lancaster seethes. "There were times when we had to fight them."

BOB YOUNG'S overriding memory, meanwhile, is the Apollo's infamous circle balcony, which moved up and down by as much as three feet when the audience jumped around.

"That was scary," Young recalls. "The amount of movement was so unbelievable that you really feared the balcony might come crashing down."

"Look at photos taken with one of those motor-drive cameras – the ones that go 'click-click-click' in less than a second – and you can see the movement," Rossi exclaims. "The sound desk was upstairs and Mal Kingsnorth, our front of house sound guy back then, would come backstage shaking after each gig and go: 'F*cking hell'. They must have made that balcony with steel girders to allow it to spring, or otherwise people would have got killed."

"From my position high up on the drums at the back, there was an incredible view of the crowd doing their thing, and with the balcony bouncing," John Coghlan smiles. "My dad came from Glasgow and we really loved going there. If they could do so, the crowd would tear the clothes right off your back."

JUST LIKE the Frantic Four themselves, 'Live!' was a statement in simplicity. The house lights were lowered and Glasgow roared. The band's friend and boozing partner Jackie Lynton took the microphone and asked the immortal question: "Is there anybody out there that wants to rock?" Glasgow went even wilder still. The band walked onto the stage and for a moment or two tinkered with their instruments, before Rossi began proceedings with the informal greeting: "How are you then, alright?" And we were off to the races with the leisurely chug-chug-chug of 'Junior's Wailing'.

Lynton's intro was the ultimate blokey welcome to the ultimate gathering of blokes. At the time there were few women in Quo's audiences. For some strange reason Francis Rossi remembers Jackie effing and blinding during his delivery, calling the supposed use of expletives "a bit unnecessary." When *Rock Candy Mag* corrects him and confirms there was no swearing, Rossi is temporarily speechless. 'Honestly,' we insist, 'there are no swearwords.' Finally Rossi laughs disbelievingly: "You're p*ssing down my leg." But while the clarion call to the Apollo really didn't feature bad language of any sort, it was certainly belligerent.

"'Belligerent.' That's the right word," Rossi laughs. "I'll have to go away and check whether or not he swears now."

WITH JUST two songs pulled from 'Blue For You' ('Is There A Better Way' and 'Rain'), the live album is an exquisite romp through Quo's halcyon boogie-rock years. The centrepiece of the Glasgow concerts and the ensuing album was 'Forty-Five Hundred Times', a Rossi-Parfitt composition that had first appeared on Quo's 1973 album, 'Hello!'. Just under 10 minutes long in the studio, onstage Quo used the song as an excuse to stretch out and jam, sometimes extending it to twice

> "I'M HAPPY THAT THE ALBUM WAS LEFT THE WAY IT WAS, MISTAKES AND ALL. ASK ANY QUO FAN AND THEY'LL AGREE. THEY LIKED IT FOR THE RAWNESS. TO HAVE POLISHED IT UP AFTERWARDS WOULD HAVE MADE IT A BIT CABARET."
> **JOHN COGHLAN**

> "THERE'S NOBODY THAT COULD FOLLOW QUO. I FELT SORRY FOR ANY BAND THAT HAD TO SUPPORT US OR ANY BAND THAT HAD TO GO ON AFTER US – NO MATTER HOW BIG THEY WERE."
> **ALAN LANCASTER**

or even three times its original length. On 'Live!', 'Forty-Five...' took up most of Side Two of the vinyl edition, running to almost 17 minutes. It's well known that Rossi had a love-hate relationship with the song, but in '76 Quo sound fiery and full of enthusiasm when performing it.

Lancaster: "When we started to play that song we'd look at one other and smile: 'Okay, heads down... see you in 20 minutes."

Years later Parfitt told me: "It was just a jam. The first part of the song was the song – four and-a-half-minutes or whatever – but we'd make the extra bits up. Night after night we would just read one another; there was almost a sense of telepathy between us. It was a fantastic live jam... you'd just know when to get softer and then take it somewhere a lot heavier. It was incredible, you'd get swept away by this rollercoaster of music and not quite knowing what was going on – but that was its joy. The only way you could end it was by nodding and saying: 'Shall we finish it here?' There was such feeling and passion that it just sped by in an instant."

After 45 years Rossi is able to see value in a track that many fans consider their favourite. "I'm not the greatest guitar player in the world, and I've improved a lot, but when I listen to that recording I hear things that make me go: 'That's really good'," he notes. "It was an interesting song."

"'Forty-Five Hundred Times' is pretty much unique," Lancaster concurs. "You could pulse away on the bass, but it has different syncopation things happening. Sometimes I was playing down-strokes for 20 minutes, and that was hard. Even by using the same notes you can change the dynamic. That's how we played it for that long and kept it interesting."

When the Frantic Four reunited in 2013, and for a second time the following year, they included an abridged version of 'Forty-Five Hundred Times' that made an abrupt segue into 'Rain', or into 'Gotta Go Home' on the second tour.

"People ask why I can't play [the full-length version] now, and the answer is simple: I'd have to f*cking learn it again, which would be very tricky," Francis admits. "I've absolutely no idea how I managed certain things on that song. I hear them now and think: 'How did I do that? It's impossible.' But of course certain parts of it are truly brilliant.

"You know, some people think I'm against the 'old' Quo, but I'm not," he insists, warming to the subject. "Some of what we did back then was terrible. I know, because I was there. But there were also bits that were brilliant, and that's what I love about music – it's all about trying to find the elusive butterfly."

Lancaster, too, now experiences moments of genuine revelation over his own playing. "When I listen to a song like 'Just Take Me' I can't believe I played that," he marvels.

FOR THE final song of the set proper on 'Live!', Quo roared through an extended version of 'Roadhouse Blues', a track originally written and recorded by The Doors that Quo covered on the 'Piledriver' album. The song had been a staple of their live set from 1972. The band would stoke up the fans to leap around to an improvised part of the tune, where an Irish guitar lick was crossed with the 'The Mexican Hat Dance'. It became known as 'the jig'. From earlier days when crowds had to be enticed to get up and boogie, Rossi would implore them to stand up and become part of the show, introducing the lick once, twice or as many times as necessary until people were moving. Not that the Glasgow Apollo needed a second invitation.

"I've always been fascinated by Irish music," Rossi nods. "For Quo, it was so powerful. You'd shift from a shuffle, let the note hang in the air for a few seconds and launch into that, and the whole place went: 'Yeah, I'll have some of this.'"

Carried away by the excitement of the show, Lancaster managed to mess up the lyrics to the band's version of Chuck Berry's 'Bye Bye Johnny'. And of course Quo left in the mistake on the album. "I really don't remember that," Alan laughs. "Perhaps it's one of the many things that first made us think: 'This [album] isn't very good'."

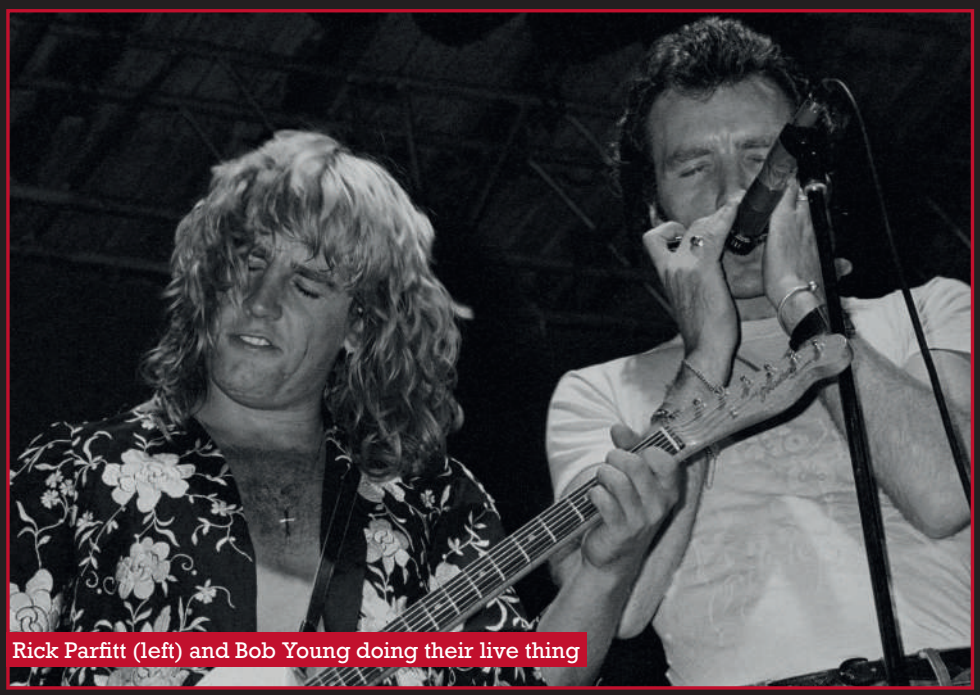
EVEN TODAY certain hardcore fans continue to bemoan the presence of Andrew Bown, the former

Photos: Getty Images/Erica Echenberg/Redferns; Getty Images/Gus Stewart/Redferns

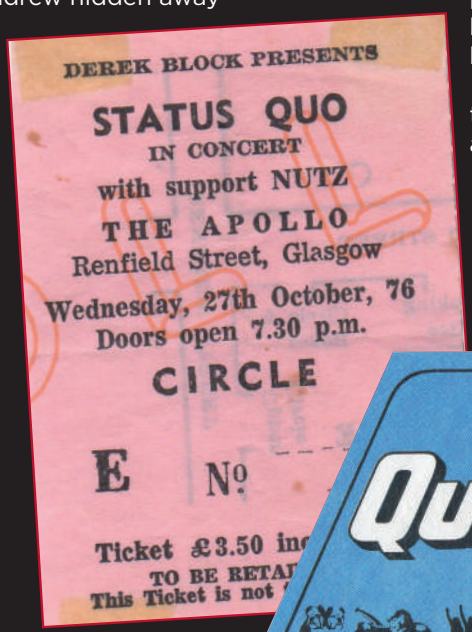
EYEWITNESS DATELINE: 1976-1977

keyboardist from The Herd who's played with Quo since the days of 'Hello!'. Sure enough, when the band rebooted as the Frantics it was done strictly as a quartet. However, Bown was with Quo in Glasgow and, of course, appears on the album.

"Andrew was there. You just couldn't hear him and no f*cker could see him," Rossi confirms. "That came from Alan, and I'm not knocking him for that. I always liked the embellishment of keyboards, but Alan didn't. So we had Andrew hidden away behind the drapes, which looking back now seems pretty f*cking stupid. And let's not forget that the positive aspect of having Andrew around is that he co-wrote 'Whatever You Want', 'Burning Bridges', and some of our most important songs."



Rick Parfitt (left) and Bob Young doing their live thing



"Andy's contribution is much bigger than he's sometimes given credit for," agrees Bob Young. "In one way or another he's been there since the early 1970s, and yet he's never taken sides in any of the disputes. He didn't fall out with anybody, and he's an important part of the band."

Coghlan admits that the conversation about 'Live!' inspires him to consider adding a few more of its selections to the live set of his own band, John Coghlan's Quo.

"JCQ plays the songs that Francis's band no longer performs," he comments. "We play the band's music from the 1970s, the music the fans want to hear. In my view, it's the best of Quo."

IN 1976, the drug culture that eventually strangled the Frantic Four was still a little way off. Although 'Blue For You' featured a track written by Parfitt while on speed ('Mystery Song'), their recreational substance of choice was cannabis. Despite being the first man to leave – in 1981 – John Coghlan never fell into the trap, preferring to stick to alcohol. However, it was only a matter of time before the situation took its toll.

"Spud [Coghlan] was the boozer; me, Nuff [Lancaster], and Rick were the smokers," Rossi explains. "The three of us loved a joint. Spud would come into a hotel room, p*ssed, and we'd all laugh at him because we thought he looked ridiculous. Of course that was unfair on John, because we must have looked ridiculous too."

"Ever since I was young I hated the fact that drugs took things over," Coghlan explains. "Having no control always gave me the horrors. It was really exciting to be in a great band and to be so creative though, especially at the start. So I don't hold it against the other guys: each to their own, right? I was just afraid of being nicked!"

DESPITE THE oncoming collision of lifestyle choices, Rossi remembers there being a strong camaraderie within the band.

"It was a good, solid bond between us all," he states emphatically. "Rick and I were still very close at that time. And that's because the band was still going somewhere – and that's the point. Later on the drinking became more and more important. Bob had to book a separate room for the boozers, and we'd take it over and have this thing called Blackie's Bar where everyone met after the gig."

In the 2014 interview, Parfitt recalled there being mild differences within the band back in '76, "but nothing serious," adding, "Of course we were on a great roll. When [years later] it all fell apart I couldn't get my head around it all. I just wouldn't accept it."

Jackie Lynton's presence within the Quo camp was a constant source of entertainment and Coghlan recalls a late night/early morning spent in the band's hotel bar following one Apollo show.

"A huge group of fans was outside looking in through

the window at myself, Jackie, Bob Young, Rick, and Alan having a drink," he chuckles. "Maybe Francis was there too. Jackie said: 'Come on, let's moon them' and we dropped our jeans. We kept our underpants on, because it was quite a nice hotel. But the fans thought it was hilarious and loved it."

Lynton went on to introduce Quo concerts for a while longer, and in later years was a co-writer of their hit 'Again And Again'. He also became the frontman of John Coghlan's solo outfit, the Diesel Band.

"Jackie was a very funny guy to have around," Rossi agrees. "He was very good at picking somebody's weaknesses and ridiculing them for them. That went around the band a bit for a while and became quite poisonous, but in another life Jackie could easily have been a stand-up comedian."

'LIVE!' FEATURED a distinctive 'ripped' cover design, with moody black and white shots of Parfitt and Coghlan on the front, and Rossi and Lancaster on the reverse, plus live photography from Robert Ellis. The inner bags of the original vinyl version featured charismatic colour portrait shots courtesy of Terry O'Neill. The double-gatefold package was put together by Hipgnosis, the renowned company whose work was synonymous with albums by Pink Floyd, Led Zeppelin, UFO, and Black Sabbath.

When it was released in March 1977, 'Live!' got to number three in the UK and went gold in Britain, Germany, and France. The band's record label, Vertigo, had the album remixed for the US market, but Quo weren't happy with what they heard.

"Yeah, I vaguely remember that happening," Rossi muses. "The ambient mics [that recorded the atmosphere] were so important. If you messed with them the sound would change drastically. So there was very little you could do to tart it up. People kept on telling us what we needed to do to break the US market. But the bottom line was that for whatever reason the band didn't suit America. Either that, or we just didn't spend enough time playing there. Slade even moved out there for a while, and it still didn't work for them."

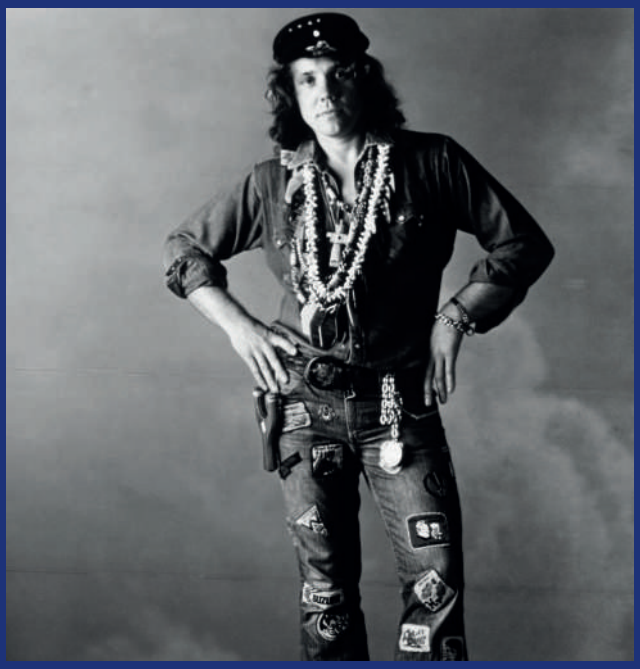
All the same *Rock Candy Mag* boss Derek Oliver believes that Quo should consider following the examples of The Allman Brothers Band and Humble Pie. Years after the original releases those bands put out expanded boxed sets of their own iconic concert releases from 1971, 'At Fillmore East' and 'Performance Rockin' The Fillmore', each featuring the performances captured over the nights concerned in their entirety. When I suggest that there would be great excitement for a special deluxe edition of Quo's trio of gigs at the Glasgow Apollo, the line goes momentarily quiet.

"Can I hear someone shuffling with a box of tissues over there?" Rossi replies, to hoots of laughter from the pair of us. "But that's a great idea and I'll look into it."

There must be a lot of potentially releasable material from this halcyon era. For instance, what about the shows recorded in Southend and Stoke for that 'Live!' EP featuring 'Roll Over Lay Down'?

"Apart from whether we still have the tapes, it's all about whether they'll copy. They'd need to be baked first," Rossi replies, before succumbing to a burst of nostalgia. "I'd forgotten about the Kursaal in Southend. We used to love going down there. We'd arrive early, and get hotdogs and those mini-doughnuts, then cockles and whelks, and go on the big dipper, then be sick and go off to do the gig."

Also released in '77, 'Tokyo Quo' was a single-disc set originally intended exclusively for the Far East market.



"Anybody out there that wants to rock?"

Jackie Lynton on how he came to deliver that rabble-rousing intro to 'Status Quo Live!'

"I FIRST MET THE Quo boys in America in 1973. They were an incredible band and very, very nice geezers. I became friendly with all of them. I'd just left Savoy Brown and when we got back to England the Quo boys found out that in real life I was a painter and decorator. I did both of Rick Parfitt's houses, I painted Francis Rossi's hallway, then half of Bob Young's house. When they invited me on the road with them I said: 'No, I'm watching the f*cking telly.' What a stupid question! At the time they were the biggest band in the country. 'No, mate, I've got to get home to put the bins out.'

"So of course I said yes and off we went. Quo were very professional. They used to soundcheck at three pm every day. I was humping gear and having a laugh, but a couple of times they let me get up and do a little vocal with them. On the telly I'd seen Emerson, Lake & Palmer had a bloke with a knotted handkerchief on his head like this [he imitates a Gumby from the *Monty Python* TV show] to bring them onstage. I thought that was fantastic. So one afternoon in Glasgow I messed about with my own voice saying: 'Introducing... the greatest band in the world... Status Quo.'

"Because of that, either Francis or Rick asked me to bring them on that evening. I'd had a couple of shandies and said; 'OK, I'll do it'. I knew them well enough not to forget their names: 'Ladies and gentlemen, will you welcome: Alan Lancaster, John Coghlan, Rick Parfitt, Francis Rossi... the greatest band in the land.' The punters in Glasgow loved it, mate, and so did the band. On the second night I asked: 'Is there anybody out there that wants to rock?' and that's the one they picked. I think each night was different.

"At the time I don't think I even knew that they were recording a live album. When I found out, I thought it was my 15 minutes of fame, mate. You know, 'When I get home I'll throw my f*cking paintbrushes in the river.'"

Photos: Getty Images/Erica Echenberg/Redferns; Getty Images/Gems/Redferns

EYEWITNESS DATELINE: 1976-1977

"Glasgow was the most raucous audience in Europe"

Its nine tracks from the Nakano Sun Plaza Hall were added to a 2014 boxed edition of 'Live!' and were pressed onto vinyl for the same year's Record Store Day. Presumably, the full show must still exist in a vault somewhere...

"Again, you're making me think that it must," Rossi considers. "I wonder where the tapes are now. Can I still hear you scrambling around for tissues?"

As the band's unofficial archivist, Bob Young notes sagely: "I'm writing all of this stuff down. If the record label wants it to happen, it'll happen."

> "SOME PEOPLE THINK I'M AGAINST THE 'OLD' QUO, BUT I'M NOT. SOME OF WHAT WE DID BACK THEN WAS TERRIBLE. I KNOW, BECAUSE I WAS THERE. BUT THERE WERE ALSO BITS THAT WERE BRILLIANT, AND THAT'S WHAT I LOVE ABOUT MUSIC – IT'S ALL ABOUT TRYING TO FIND THE ELUSIVE BUTTERFLY."
> **FRANCIS ROSSI**

AN INCREASINGLY frazzled and alienated John Coghlan elected to walk away from Status Quo during the recording of their 20th anniversary album, '1+9+8+2'. It would take Lancaster longer to depart. Alan was part of the line-up that 'retired from the road' during the summer of 1984. He played with Quo again at Live Aid in 1985, but was forced out of the band when Francis and Rick put together a new line-up for the '86 album 'In The Army Now'.

"Had they stayed together after the 'End Of The Road' tour I don't think Quo would have lasted for too much longer," theorises Bob Young. "By then the differences were too deep. Feelings inside the camp had turned really sh*tty. Cocaine had come into the dynamic and it changed a lot of things."

And yet, as previously noted, in 2013 Rossi, Parfitt, Lancaster, and Coghlan decided to play together again for what they thought would be one last time. In order to do so Rossi and Lancaster, who'd first met as schoolfriends, rekindled their once-curdled relationship. After the rancour of a court case that had enforced Lancaster's exit and a vitriolic war of words that followed, it was a beautiful thing to see.

"Those Frantic Four gigs turned out to be some of the best I've ever done," an emotional Parfitt told me in 2014. "We can talk all day about Scottish audiences being loud, but those two Hammersmith shows... I'd never heard anything like it."

"Err... that's a brave thing for Rick to say, but I suppose maybe he has a point," Rossi acknowledges now. "At Hammersmith I really did do what comedians do – the old 'look-to-see-who's-behind me' gag. Very soon I realised that if I wanted to really bring the house down, all I needed to do was say Alan Lancaster and John Coghlan's names, and everybody came all over the place."

"The room was so full of love and affection, my spine was tingling. Playing all that pre-1976 stuff again, I was on a wave from start to finish," Parfitt had enthused. "None of us ever thought that it could happen, and when it did... it was almost unexplainable. Then it happened again [a year later]."

Regrettably, the love-in between Lancaster and Rossi was never destined to last. With everyone else from the Frantics camp keen to go out for a third time, Francis dug in his heels. The pair haven't spoken since a Boxing Day phone call some years back when Rossi made his view unequivocally clear. And now with Rick dead, so too are the Frantic Four.

IT'S OFTEN theorised that a live album bookends a particular era in time. That's certainly true of 'Live!'. Quo's next album, 'Rocking All Over The World', was a more polished set that enhanced the contribution of Andrew Bown. Masterminded by producer Pip Williams, this reinvention saw the band cross over to a far wider audience than simply those who grew their hair long and wore denim cut-offs.

Lancaster's disdain for this softer sound was well documented, eventually contributing to what was an acrimonious departure. Looking back on the 'RAOTW' era and beyond, Alan notably proclaimed: "[Membership of] Quo was like being in a football team; you were allowed to have the occasional bad game, but nobody wanted to hear us playing netball."

Rossi has heard all these arguments before. "We got so many letters when we made 'Rocking All Over The World', with people saying: 'What the f*ck have you done?'" he relates. "But if I remember rightly it sold more than the previous three records or something."

Looking back on the 'Live!' album, in 2014 Parfitt had noted that it marked the end of what he called Quo's "tatty era." "Afterwards we became a bit more polished – the shiny shirts, and all," he added. "The band's initial image disappeared, which was a shame. But I suppose it had to happen [to take things to the next level]."

"Well said, Ricky – I agree with that," chirrups Rossi when informed of Parfitt's words from beyond the grave. "After the live album we definitely lost that 'tattiness'. It did shut that era down."

"After 'Live!' things started to go wrong for Quo. Not noticeably so, but they were wrong all the same," Lancaster believes. "I respect Pip Williams as a writer and a guitarist, even as a producer. But he wasn't the right producer for Quo because he was weak. The band had fallen out with Bob [Young, co-writer of 'Caroline', 'Down Down', and more] and as Pip became susceptible to ideas from Francis the music began to change. Pip let that go. I'm not talking about live, but it definitely happened in the studio. Rick was among the first to notice it, which is why, eventually, the 'Just Supposin'' album was self-produced."

HOW MUCH truth lurks behind Jackie Lynton's claim that in 1976 Quo were "the number one rock'n'roll band in the land"? To put that somewhat brave statement into context, a year later Thin Lizzy would release their own in-concert record, 'Live And Dangerous', Deep Purple had just broken up at that point, but Zeppelin were still a major force.

"Oh, every band makes that boast, don't they?" shrugs Rossi in self-deprecating fashion. "It only really applies to the Stones, and they're nearly octogenarian and only do one gig a week when they're on tour. But they still outsell every other f*cker."

OK then, let's reframe the question. Do you think it was true at the time? Did Quo believe themselves to be top dogs in 1976?

"I think one member did, and it wasn't Rick," Rossi fires back gamely. "But each of the band had moments of believing that statement. Business-wise, we were doing much better than most of our rivals, but put us next to 'Hotel California' and you're p*ssing down your own leg. In terms of musicianship and singing, the Americans always win."

The suggestion requires no rephrasing for Alan Lancaster. "There's nobody that could follow Quo," he states proudly. "I felt sorry for any band that had to support us or any band that had to go on after us – no matter how big they were. That's one of the reasons we didn't break the States. Over there we opened for the likes of Aerosmith, the J Geils Band, and ZZ Top, and we ripped the place apart. The lights would come up and half an hour later the place was still buzzing from what it had seen. Nobody could touch us. I truly believe that in 1976 we were at the top of our game."

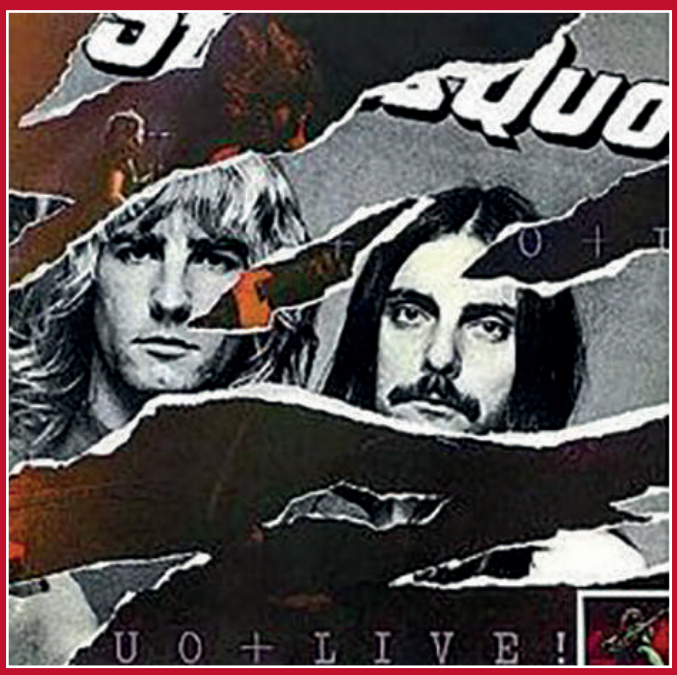


Photo: Getty Images/Erica Echenberg/Redferns

STATUS QUO – 'LIVE!'

Recorded: 27-29 October 1976
Released: March 1977

LINE UP:
Francis Rossi – guitar, vocals
Rick Parfitt – guitar, vocals
Alan Lancaster – bass, vocals
John Coghlan – drums

ADDITIONAL MUSICIANS:
Andy Bown – keyboards
Bob Young – harmonica

Producer Status Quo
Production assistant and mix Damon Lyon-Shaw
Engineer Steve Lillywhite
Recorded at: The Apollo Theatre, Glasgow, Scotland

TRACK LISTING

Intro/Junior's Wailing (Kieran White, Martin Pugh)
Backwater (Rick Parfitt, Alan Lancaster)
Just Take Me (Rick Parfitt, Alan Lancaster)
Is There A Better Way? (Alan Lancaster, Francis Rossi)
In My Chair (Francis Rossi, Bob Young)
Little Lady (Rick Parfitt)
Most Of The Time (Francis Rossi, Bob Young)
Forty-Five Hundred Times (Francis Rossi, Rick Parfitt)
Roll Over Lay Down (Francis Rossi, Bob Young, Rick Parfitt, Alan Lancaster, John Coghlan)
Big Fat Mama (Francis Rossi, Rick Parfitt)
Caroline (Francis Rossi, Bob Young)
Bye Bye Johnny (Chuck Berry)
Rain (Rick Parfitt)
Don't Waste My Time (Francis Rossi, Bob Young)
Roadhouse Blues (Jim Morrison, Ray Manzarek, Robbie Krieger, John Densmore)

UNTOUC

Touch photographed in 1980. L-R: Doug Howard (bass and vocals), Glenn Kithcart (drums), Craig Brooks (guitar and vocals), Mark Mangold (keyboards and vocals)

Touch is one of *the* great lost AOR bands. Formed in 1978, the group's 1980 debut album is now an acknowledged classic despite failing to set the world alight when it first appeared. *Dave Reynolds* talks to main man **Mark Mangold** about the band's unlikely return...

DESPITE IT BEING THE biggest gig his band Touch had played in their relatively short time together, keyboardist and vocalist Mark Mangold had no sense of making history when he stepped on stage in front of 35,000 people at the very first Monsters Of Rock festival in England on 16 August 1980.

"We didn't have any idea that Castle Donington would become this iconic venue," he says today. "It wasn't until 20 years later that someone mentioned we were the very first band ever to play there. It was a real 'Holy sh*t! Really?' moment."

The New York City band – Mangold, guitarist and vocalist Craig Brooks, bassist and vocalist Doug Howard, and drummer Glenn Kithcart – had only just released their eponymous debut album, but Mark already had a lengthy CV by the time he arrived at Donington. He'd learned his trade in the late '60s as a member of Long Island psychedelic rock outfit Valhalla, who released an eponymous album for United Artists in 1969. He then formed symphonic hard rock outfit American Tears and signed to Columbia. That band released two albums, 'Branded Bad' in 1974 and 'Tear Gas' a year later, before revamping the line-up for 1977's 'Powerhouse'. The new iteration of the group featured Kithcart and Brooks, who would later accompany Mangold into Touch.

Rock fans soon zoned in on Touch because of the

HABLE!

band's warm and inviting sound. Two of the tracks included on the Touch debut were updated versions of American Tears songs 'Listen (Can You Feel It)' and 'Last Chance For Love'. However, the Touch album had more edge to its sound, and this was perfectly exemplified on songs such as 'Don't You Know What Love Is' and 'So High'. It felt like a sure-fire hit, but success never happened.

A second album that was recorded in 1981 was shelved for years and the band disintegrated, appreciated only by real AOR aficionados who were united in considering the debut album a melodic rock classic. Fast forward 40 years, though, and Touch have made the unlikeliest of returns. The original line-up has reunited to record and release a new album, 'Tomorrow Never Comes', allowing me the chance to dream of a long overdue AOR revival with Mark Mangold's lush keyboards front and centre!

TELL ME, MARK, WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO PLAY KEYBOARDS IN THE FIRST PLACE?

"I started off on drums, tried the saxophone, and played the accordion for a minute, but none of them were very satisfying. So I started noodling on the piano we had at home and eventually progressed to the Hammond C3 organ because it was so lush, rich, and orchestral. I loved the tone. As newer keyboards were invented it became possible to create even more orchestration and even more lush tapestries. No other instrument came close in terms of what you could do with it."

HOW QUICKLY DID YOU PUT YOUR TALENTS TO USE IN A BAND?

"There was a club where I used to live on Long Island called the Action House. Vanilla Fudge and The Rascals would play there. It was so easy to go down and see great bands. I started playing in a group called

Photo courtesy of Mark Mangold

OVERLOOKED

Gathering Storm, which then morphed into Valhalla. I was only 17 at the time, but United Artists offered us a record deal. We did the record on a very low budget and the band didn't last, but I'd got the bug, and American Tears was a logical musical progression from Valhalla."

THE FIRST TWO AMERICAN TEARS ALBUMS WERE REALLY SYMPHONIC, BUT YOU CHANGED TO A MORE COMMERCIAL SOUND ON THIRD ALBUM 'POWERHOUSE'. WHY?

"American Tears tried to do some commercial stuff, but I was the only singer, surrounded by keyboards, and pretty much generating what was going on musically on my own. After a while it got to be a lonely job. I wanted harmonies and other vocals to evolve the sound a bit. So we added a guitarist, Craig Brooks, and then kicked into three-part harmonies and guitar tapestries. We morphed into Touch – which was originally called Voyager – because what we were starting to do was so different to the American Tears sound. It was no longer a keyboard-based trio, so we changed the name and hooked up with our manager, Bruce Payne [who was looking after Rainbow at the time]. He was hugely responsible for a lot of what then happened for us."

"WE WERE A WELL-REHEARSED BAND. TO BE HONEST WE COULD'VE PLAYED OUR SET IN OUR SLEEP, WE WERE THAT TIGHT."

HOW DID YOU GET INVOLVED WITH PAYNE?

"When we were still Voyager we rehearsed in a loft on 36th Street in downtown Manhattan. Instead of going out and playing gigs and constantly showcasing for people, we shot a nine-song performance on video, including a number called 'Black Star' that's been on YouTube for years. We pounded the pavement looking to gain interest and presented the tape to a number of managers. We had offers from some pretty major management companies, but met with Bruce after being introduced to him by [Rainbow guitarist] Ritchie Blackmore and he was keen to take us on."

HOW MUCH DID HIS MUSIC BIZ CONNECTIONS HELP?

"Bruce was powerful and he was hooked up. When he played stuff for people, they'd listen. Within two weeks of him becoming our manager we had a record deal with Atco, which was pretty amazing!"

SO WHY THE NAME CHANGE TO TOUCH?

"Glenn Kithcart and Doug Howard had joined the band and they were both fantastic. We wanted three great lead vocalists – and Doug and Craig are both great lead vocalists. Then we started blending those three-part harmonies and that sort of became our sound. It took things to another level. The name change was really important. It was all about starting anew and not having any baggage. We were insanely determined to get out there and be a success."

WHAT ARE YOUR MEMORIES OF RECORDING THE FIRST TOUCH ALBUM?

"We had a great producer in Tim Friese-Greene. It was the first time I'd had the chance to work with a world-class producer and had the time to fully realise my visions and dreams. Tim had worked with Roy Thomas Baker on Queen records and really knew his stuff, especially where vocal harmonies were concerned. It was wonderful for us to be able to get the sounds on tape that we were hearing in our heads.

"We started recording at Atlantic Studios in New York, but quickly moved out to Kingdom Sound on Long Island. We were able to take our time there and it didn't cost us the fortune it would've done had we stayed on at Atlantic! We tried crazy things to get different sounds, like putting pianos through Marshall amplifiers. All kinds of cool stuff, but we finished the whole record in about a month."

WHAT WAS YOUR MUSICAL GOAL?

"In those days bands were carving out their own signature sounds. There were no genres and everyone was different. What we were doing was original and creative, but we were just doing the best we could for ourselves. We didn't know that it would be so well received. It's both amazing and gratifying that all these years later the album is seen as one of the best melodic rock records."

WHY DID ARIOLA RELEASE THE ALBUM IN EUROPE RATHER THAN ATCO?

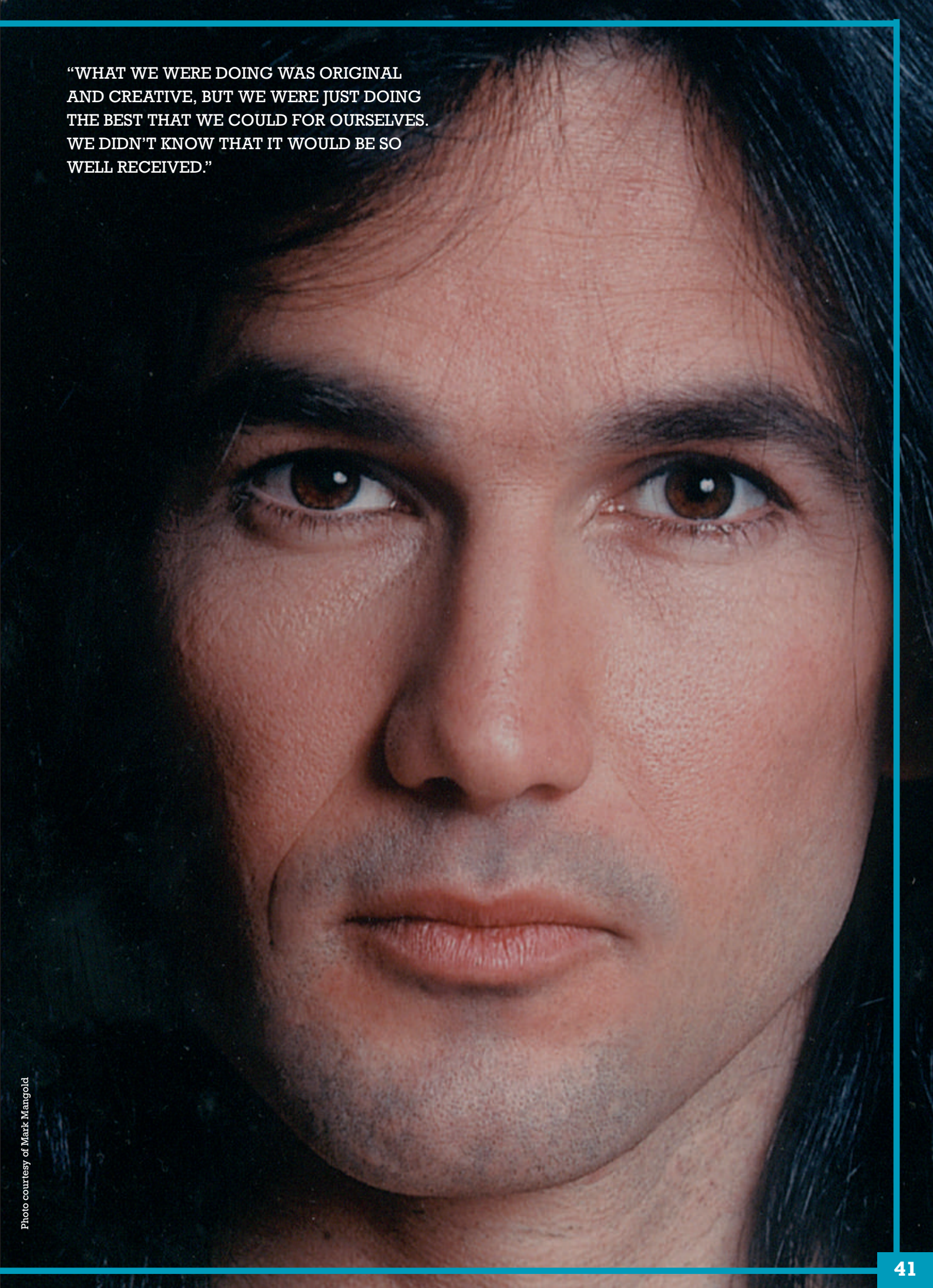
"That was something Bruce chose to do, and who were we to tell him how to go about things? It was something that was out of our hands, but I guess it was because he had a good personal relationship with Ariola. They did a lot for us, actually."

WAS IT A SURPRISE THAT YOU WERE SO WELL RECEIVED IN THE UK AND EUROPE?

"We were getting quite a bit of airplay in the States with 'Don't You Know What Love Is' and we had some nice pockets of success there. But playing Donington on a bill headlined by our management stablemates Rainbow, as well as European shows with them, really helped us to get in front of a lot of European people. The fact that we didn't suck also helped!"

SO HOW DID YOU ALL GET ALONG WITH THE GUYS IN RAINBOW?

"We became close friends. I'm pals with [vocalist] Graham Bonnet and [keyboardist] Don Airey to this day, while Glenn became very good friends with [drummer] Cozy Powell. I developed a nice camaraderie with Ritchie Blackmore and [bassist] Roger Glover too. Ritchie liked the band and was really helpful. Roger



"WHAT WE WERE DOING WAS ORIGINAL AND CREATIVE, BUT WE WERE JUST DOING THE BEST THAT WE COULD FOR OURSELVES. WE DIDN'T KNOW THAT IT WOULD BE SO WELL RECEIVED."

Photo courtesy of Mark Mangold

OVERLOOKED

Mark Mangold: "I have the freedom to do anything I like on the keyboards."

produced the version of 'Don't You Know What Love Is' that appeared on the 'Monsters Of Rock' live album that was released after the Donington show. Roger also produced a song called 'Take It Back' that we'd recorded for our intended second album."

HOW MANY LIVE SHOWS HAD THE BAND DONE BEFORE DONINGTON?

"Maybe five or six gigs with Rainbow in Europe, but we were a well-rehearsed group. We'd played one or two shows in the States before we came over, but to be honest we could've played our set in our sleep, we were that tight."

> "THE OTHER GUYS CAME OVER TO MY HOUSE IN FEBRUARY AND MARCH 2020, BEFORE THE PANDEMIC HIT. THE FIRST THING WE DID WAS PLAY 'DON'T YOU KNOW WHAT LOVE IS' TOGETHER – AND IT WAS SO GOOD PEOPLE CRIED!"

DOES IT FRUSTRATE YOU THAT TOUCH IS BETTER KNOWN FOR DOUG HOWARD SWALLOWING A BEE LIVE ON STAGE AT DONINGTON THAN FOR YOUR MUSIC?

"I'm not sure that the incident got *more* attention than the music, but we have come to terms with the story being part of our history. And Doug swallowing a bee on stage pales in comparison to most of the other rock'n'roll stories that are out there."

SO WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED?

"All I know is that Doug swallowed a bee on stage, got stung, and went off to a tent to be treated. At least Bruce Payne saw the funny side of it. When he came out of the tent he said to everyone, 'Ladies and Gentlemen. The bee has survived!'"

YOU STARTED RECORDING A SECOND ALBUM WITH TODD RUNDGREN PRODUCING, BUT IT WAS ONLY RELEASED MANY YEARS LATER IN 1998. WHY WAS THAT?

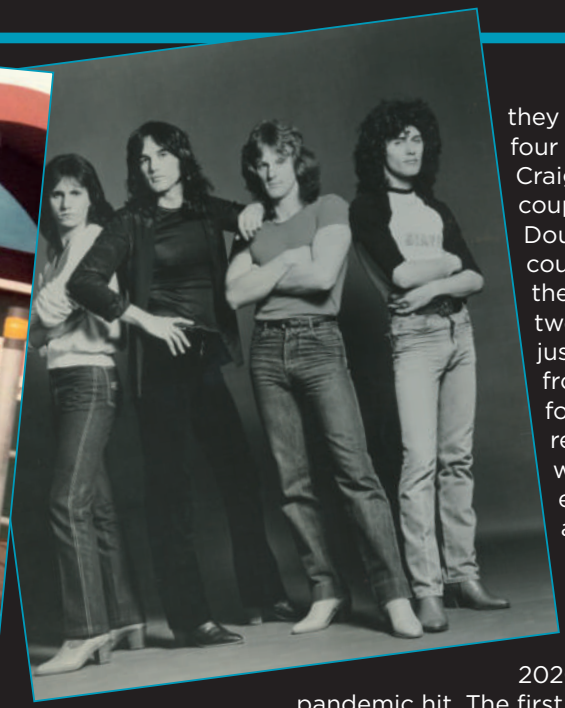
"We recorded the whole of that second record with Todd, but he was pretty much absent for most of the time we were in the studio. The tracks weren't recorded properly and they didn't sound right, so we tried to salvage it with a mix by Bob Clearmountain. Bob is one of the best mixers in the world in my opinion and he did what he could with the recordings, but it still wasn't good enough for the label. It just didn't measure up to the first album, even though the songs in themselves were very strong.

"Since then, tunes like 'Frozen On A Wire' have become fan favourites, but at the time Atco decided they didn't want to invest any more time or money in the record. So the album just sat there for years [eventually to be packaged and released with the debut as 'The Complete Works I & II']. We're actually in the process of putting the second album out again digitally through Spotify at the moment."

PRESUMABLY THIS LACK OF RECORD COMPANY SUPPORT WAS SOMETHING THAT DAMAGED THE BAND IN THE END?

"Things just evaporated because there wasn't much happening. I moved on to work with Michael Bolton, did some stuff with Fran Cosmo [of Orion The Hunter and Boston fame] and then formed Drive, She Said with Al Fritsch."

Touch drummer Glenn Kithcart with Rainbow's Cozy Powell. The bands toured together and were friends.



YOU WROTE HIT SONGS WITH MICHAEL BOLTON AND CHER. DID THAT FEEL GOOD AFTER NOT MAKING IT BIG WITH TOUCH?
"Sure it made me feel good, but it wasn't as if I was down after Touch. I'm a very positive and enthusiastic person. I don't tend to look at the negative too much. Maybe it's just blind stupidity, but I just don't take no for an answer. I don't know if I was raised that way, or if it's in my DNA. But that's just the way it is."

LET'S TALK ABOUT DRIVE, SHE SAID. THE BAND WAS JUST YOU WITH ONE OTHER PERSON. WAS IT ALWAYS INTENDED TO BE THAT WAY?
"Yes it was. At that point it was all about not being tied to a group. Al Fritsch was awesome and the two of us really made it happen with Drive, She Said. We made some great music together, but we also made some wonderful connections with the amazing musicians we worked with back then, many of whom are still friends to this day.

"People who knew me from Touch were probably interested in what I was doing, but I think we also developed a whole new audience with Drive, She Said. We toured *a lot*, all over the UK, Europe, and the States. We developed our own audience, and Al [who sadly died in 2017] was a popular performer. He was an amazing singer, a great guitar player, a great bass player, and he played keyboards better than me! He could play absolutely anything."

IT SEEMS THAT YOUR MUSIC HAS ALWAYS RESONATED MORE WITH EUROPEAN AUDIENCES THAN AMERICAN ONES, YES?
"Maybe so. We played every nook and cranny in Europe with Drive, She Said, but labels in the US just weren't interested in the kind of music we were playing. Grunge was happening at that time, so that's why CBS [who released Drive, She Said's debut album in 1989] dropped us. All the labels were shedding their more melodic rock bands."

SO HOW DID A TOUCH REUNION FINALLY HAPPEN?
"The stars aligned somehow. It started out a couple of years ago when I asked the guys if we could just do one song for old time's sake. I sent some tunes to them and they really liked four of them. Then Craig wrote a couple of songs, Doug wrote a couple more, and then I added two more... it just snowballed from there. We found that we really enjoyed working with each other again. They came over to my house in February and March 2020, before the pandemic hit. The first thing we did was play 'Don't You Know What Love Is' together – and it was so good people cried! So we started recording, and just kept going!"

WAS IT EASY TO PICK UP EXACTLY WHERE YOU GUYS HAD LEFT OFF?
"Everyone had the same energy they've always had, but now there's a much greater understanding of what we do and what we each bring to the band. Craig's range is bigger than it ever was – maybe because he didn't do a great deal of singing in the last 40 years – and Glenn's drumming is just phenomenal. Doug, of course, has kept doing it, but he's singing and playing better than ever as well."

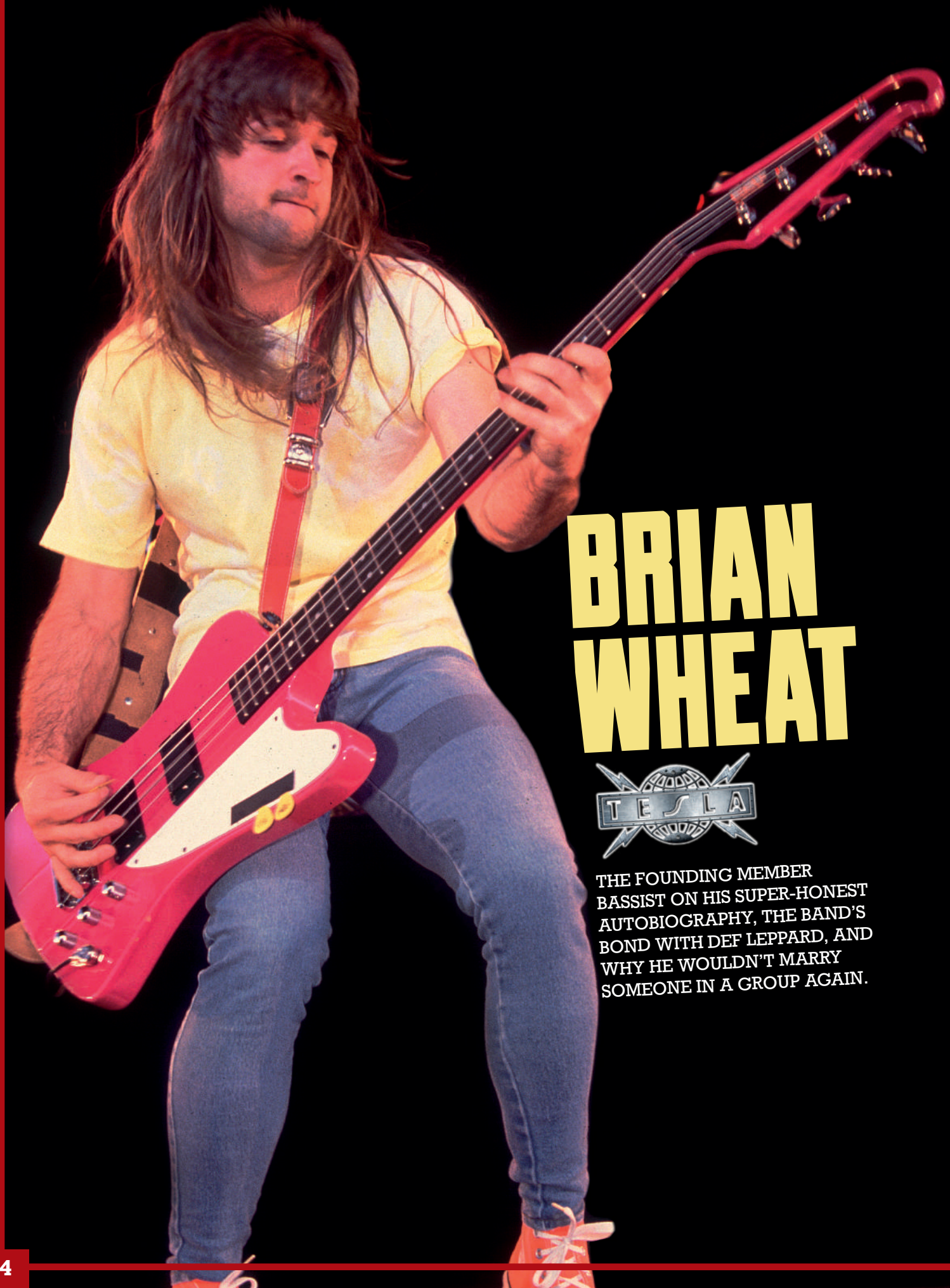
SO WHAT'S THE PLAN GOING FORWARD?
"The initial idea was to finish the record and get it out, which was a major step, and the response has been *hugely* encouraging. We're hoping to do some live shows, but for obvious reasons that probably isn't something we can do for some time. We'll just have to take things as they come."

YOU'VE ALSO RESURRECTED AMERICAN TEARS WITH A HEAVILY KEYBOARD-DOMINATED SOUND. WHY DID YOU GO BACK TO THAT BAND AS WELL?
"I hadn't played a synthesizer solo or a grimy Hammond organ in years, so I just put myself into isolation and did the first comeback record, 'Hard Core', in 2018. That was a real labour of love and I didn't know if anyone would like it, loathe it or even give a sh*t. I did that record to get me away from the pop formula. I've released two more American Tears albums since then, 'White Flags' [in 2019] and 'Free Angel Express' [in 2020]. What I like is that when I'm doing that band I have the freedom to do anything I like on the keyboards."

LAST QUESTION FOR YOU MARK. DID TOUCH BREAK UP TOO SOON?
"I believe Touch broke up *way* too soon. We should've kept going, and I wish we had, because I think we could've got way more recognition back then than we did. But then again, had we kept going maybe we would've been too burnt out by now. Could we have made this new record at that time? Definitely not, because this album is the result of all the pent-up pressure we've all felt over the years!"

Photos courtesy of Mark Mangold

THE *ROCK CANDY* Q&A



BRIAN WHEAT

TESLA

THE FOUNDING MEMBER BASSIST ON HIS SUPER-HONEST AUTOBIOGRAPHY, THE BAND'S BOND WITH DEF LEPPARD, AND WHY HE WOULDN'T MARRY SOMEONE IN A GROUP AGAIN.

YOUR AUTOBIOGRAPHY *SON OF A MILKMAN – MY CRAZY LIFE WITH TESLA* BRAVELY TACKLES A NUMBER OF SUBJECTS THAT MOST ROCK STARS DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT. WAS IT HARD FOR YOU TO OPEN UP LIKE THAT?
"I think it was good to get all that stuff off my chest. I decided that if I could talk about things like anxiety, depression, and bulimia – if I could put it all out there and not be embarrassed, or ashamed, or awkward about it – then maybe that could help people. If putting all that in my book shines a light on it then I'm happy to have done it."

BACK IN LESS-ENLIGHTENED TIMES, YOUR MANAGER PETER MENSCH TOLD YOU FLAT OUT THAT YOU WERE WAY TOO FAT? HOW DID THAT MAKE YOU FEEL?
"The problem back then was that I was working at McDonald's and was eating way too much. When you're a poor kid and all of a sudden you have access to a lot of food... Well I just went crazy. When Peter said that to me I was p*ssed off, but he was right and it shook me up enough to make me lose 100 pounds. I have to thank him for that."

HOW WAS IT REVISITING THINGS IN THE BOOK THAT HAPPENED A LONG TIME AGO IN YOUR LIFE?
"I guess it mainly made me think about the fact that a lot of people who've been in my life aren't even here any more. Guys like Pete Way, God bless him."

"NO ONE LIKES TO GO FROM PLATINUM TO 700,000 SALES, OF COURSE. BUT IT'S WEIRD THAT ALL PEOPLE TALK ABOUT IS THE FACT THAT 'BUST A NUT' DIDN'T GO PLATINUM. IT STILL SOLD 700,000 COPIES, WHICH ISN'T TO BE SNEEZED AT."

AND RONNIE MONTROSE, YES?
That's right. Ronnie produced some of the very early Tesla demos. At the time I was young, naïve, and not very good on the bass. To be honest Ronnie didn't talk to me all that much and I didn't really like him. He dealt with [guitarist] Frank [Hannon] and [vocalist] Jeff [Keith] a lot more than he did with me. But as we both got older we connected much better and we used to talk quite often over the last couple of years of his life. I'm glad I got to know him."

HOW MUCH DO YOU THINK TESLA OWE TO DEF LEPPARD?
"Def Leppard are very, very important in the history of Tesla. I believe that band helped our career immensely, particularly by getting us out on the road with them on the 'Hysteria' tour back in 1987. Without that opportunity I don't think you and I would be talking today. There's a connection we have with those guys because of the early days we spent together and the bond that we created with them then."

SO HOW DID LEPPARD GUITARIST PHIL COLLEN END UP CO-WRITING AND PRODUCING YOUR 'SHOCK' ALBUM IN 2019?
"Phil and I were hanging out together back in 2016 and he said, 'Hey, I've written this song that I think would be nice for Tesla.' He played 'Save That Goodness' for me and I loved it straight away. So the band went into the studio with Phil to record the song, and everyone had a really good time doing it. The experience was so much fun that we decided there and then that we had to make an album together."

YOUR FIRST THREE ALBUMS ALL WENT PLATINUM BEFORE GRUNGE CAME ALONG. THEN YOUR FOURTH RELEASE, 1994'S 'BUST A NUT', ONLY WENT GOLD. WAS THAT HARD TO TAKE?
"No one likes to go from platinum to 700,000 sales, of course. But it's weird that all people talk about is the fact that 'Bust A Nut' didn't go platinum. It still sold 700,000 copies, which isn't to be sneezed at. We broke up after that record, but the album's commercial performance had nothing to do with it. [Guitarist] Tommy [Skeoch] was out of the band with his drug problems, but we all had problems of our own and needed a rest. Someone should have sat us down in a room and said, 'You guys need to take a year off and then regroup.' No one did that, and that's why we broke up. Looking back, though, I'd say the split was the best thing that ever happened to the band. It's been 22 years that we've been back together now – and the name still flies."

DURING THE TESLA HIATUS YOU FORMED SOULMOTOR. HOW WAS THAT EXPERIENCE?
"It was great, because it was both a challenge and a chance to do something different. It definitely made me more creative, because I was one of the driving forces in that band, if not *the* driving force. It was just me, [drummer] Darren [Winter], and [guitarist] Atomik Tommy [McClendon]. We had a great synergy together. And funnily enough, the three of us are back together working on a new record."

HOW WAS IT BEING MARRIED TO A FELLOW ROCK MUSICIAN, SANDI SARAYA OF THE BAND SARAYA?
"Sandi and I are great friends today and I love her dearly. But I wouldn't recommend getting married to someone in the same business. Sandi and I were young, we were crazy in love, and then things just happened. I wouldn't marry someone in a band again. It's too hard, because you're always in different places."

YOU BUILT YOUR OWN RECORDING STUDIO, J STREET RECORDERS, IN SACRAMENTO BACK IN 2004. HOW'S THAT WORKED OUT?
"I love it. I took to the whole thing like a fish to water. Working in my studio is one of the things I enjoy the most about being in music. Being creative and producing new young bands, getting in there and writing new songs with people... I love the whole process of recording and creating music."

DO YOU SEE TESLA CARRYING ON FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE?
"Absolutely. The band has been a bit of a rollercoaster ride for sure, but I wouldn't trade it for anything. There's a real bond between us that keeps us together. When we get onstage as a group we don't have any problems, and we learned a long time ago that that's the most important thing. We don't see each other socially like we used to when we were kids, but there's still a kinship there. We're brothers. The only reason we're not playing now is because of all the issues surrounding COVID. And we absolutely can't wait to get back together and start playing shows again."

Interview by Xavier Russell. Photo: Getty Images/Paul Natkin

MARTY FRIEDMAN

FROM TOKYO WITH LOVE

MARTY FRIEDMAN first found fame as the lightning-fingered guitar foil to Dave Mustaine in Megadeth. But a deep-seated love for Japan led him to give it all up and move to Tokyo in 2003. *Howard Johnson* talks to Marty at length about his entire career, following his muse, and his ongoing mission to introduce Japanese music to the world...

Photo: Susumu Miyawaki

MARTY FRIEDMAN MAY LOOK like your common or garden shredder when we speak via Zoom from his home in Tokyo; long, dark, curly hair cascading down his shoulders and half a dozen guitars nonchalantly stacked in the corner of the room. Appearances can be deceiving, though. And it would be far too easy to make what would actually be a very lazy judgement. How do I know that? Well just listen to this, one of the many interesting things the American guitarist tells me during the course of our hour-and-a-half conversation.

"In the world of heavy metal and hard rock a lot of people's tastes are etched in stone," he says. "And there's absolutely nothing wrong with that. But they're not the guys who are going to randomly hunt for new things on the Internet. And some of us like to stumble onto new things, and then those new things send you down a rabbit hole that leads to other great new things, and it broadens your enjoyment of music. I think that's my responsibility to myself as an artist, to find new things that get me excited. And just as a fan of music too. I want new. I want new things as much as I want old things. But you've got to make the effort. It's not going to just find its way to you... But it's there."

> "WHEN THAT WHOLE SHREDDING STYLE BECAME A THING I REALLY WANTED TO KEEP AWAY FROM IT, BECAUSE IT BECAME THIS 'JUST PLAY AS FAST AS YOU CAN' MINDLESS WORLD. AND I'VE SPENT AN ENTIRE CAREER TRYING TO DISTANCE MYSELF FROM IT. I THINK I'VE DONE A PRETTY GOOD JOB."

It's not hard to see that it's primarily the 58-year-old's unquenchable thirst for the musical *journey* that sets him apart from many of his peers. The early part of his CV doesn't raise any eyebrows. 1980s guitar prodigy plays real fast, gets discovered by the ubiquitous Mike Varney and Shrapnel Records, makes a record with another whizz kid player. He gains some credit at the nerdy end of the scale, joins a mainstream metal act – in his case Megadeth – and finally reaps commercial rewards for his 'best in show' skills. But it's what comes next that proves Friedman is so much more than just another technical whizz banger.

In 2003, and having become obsessed with Japan's domestic music scene, he moves to the country and over the next 18 years carves himself out a career as a guitar player who is pretty much unique in understanding a wide range of both Western and Japanese musical styles. The culmination of this remarkable journey down a road less travelled is 'Tokyo Jukebox 3', Friedman's latest album that features primarily Friedman-ified versions of J-Pop hits. The playing still ticks all the boxes for people who want their guitar heroes to be dazzlingly, jaw-droppingly technical. But those shredder roots are put to the service of musical interpretations that have clearly been forged from life experiences that are entirely outside of the norm. It makes the album fascinating and worthwhile, even for someone like me who isn't instinctively drawn to the world of shred.

MARTY'S LOVE of Japanese musical culture first took a hold way back when he was a teenager living in Hawaii. But his musical journey had already started well before the Friedman family had moved to the Pacific island because of Marty's dad's work for the US National Security Agency. He'd seen Kiss performing at the Capitol Center in his native Washington DC and it was, by his own admission, "a lightbulb moment."

Before Kiss the young Marty had been obsessed by sport – "football, baseball, hockey, basketball, I played them all" – but after seeing the New York band he decided that rock'n'roll was way more wild and far more exciting.

"I went out and got a guitar immediately, and even though I couldn't play I started a band right away. Punk was a thing, so it didn't seem all that crazy. I was lucky that I didn't discover progressive music till much later, because that would definitely have discouraged me. But pretty soon I was playing Kiss and Ramones numbers, as well as stuff like Angel and Cheap Trick, Starz and Riot. I could get through some of that. It wasn't that I was all that good right away, but the bar wasn't set all that high either." ►

MARTY FRIEDMAN

Within six months Friedman was playing in a band called Deuce, "my claim to fame being that I could mimic Ace Frehley's guitar playing to a tee. Most of the songs we did were Kiss covers or originals that sounded like Kiss. So Kiss fans were like, 'Wow. This guy's super.' So they were feeding my ego, even though I really didn't deserve it. And believe me, that will help drive you to keep trying."

Right there you can see the roots of the kind of vanity inflation that surely fuelled many of those aspirant shredders. Marty denies that was the case with him, insisting that he got his ego under control pretty quickly.

"I believed all that stuff for maybe a year," he says. "But then I started to understand music a bit more, and I quickly realised there were guys out there doing stuff that I couldn't even *comprehend*. So my ego became really tiny, and looking back it was probably good to get all that out of my system at age 14 and 15, rather than when you're trying to make a career out of it. Having an ego doesn't really get you anywhere in the music business."

Marty still believes that Deuce was "a really good band", and there are bootleg recordings out there to prove it. They even supported Face Dancer, a hard rock connoisseurs' choice whose 1979 debut album, 'This World', was reissued on Rock Candy Records. "We thought we blew them away every night."

By the time the Friedman family had relocated to Hawaii, though, Marty had discovered the New Wave Of British Heavy Metal, what he calls "cutting edge stuff." On the island, however, nobody had heard of Iron Maiden, never mind Angel Witch or Raven.

"I liked the New Wave Of British Heavy Metal so much," he confirms. "But I wanted to add more guitarism to it, just take it up a few notches and 'guitar steroid' it out a little bit more. But Hawaii was the worst place to do music, because it's a tiny island in the middle of the ocean with nobody there."

Marty formed a band called Vixen, not connected to the female band of the same name. They later changed to Hawaii, "which we thought was a great name, though it didn't really help us much," and put out a couple of independent releases. More importantly, though, "I used the time I was on Hawaii wisely, because I did a lot of woodshedding, spending a lot of time with my instrument and developing my musicality. Before I went to Hawaii I was basically just a hard rock guy influenced by rock guitarists. But when I went there I started hearing all these Asian influences. Hawaii is a melting pot, so I was suddenly soaking up all this exotic music from Japan and China and all over Asia. I loved it, analysed it, and spent a lot of good learning time with it. So band life was really tough, but I kind of defined my musicality at that point, which was really important."

> "THE EXACT SAME WEEK I AUDITIONED FOR MEGADETH I ALSO HAD AN AUDITION FOR MADONNA'S BAND. HAD I NOT GOT THE MEGADETH GIG I DEFINITELY WOULD HAVE GONE TO THAT AUDITION. I PROBABLY WOULDN'T HAVE GOT THE GIG, BUT I WOULD HAVE CERTAINLY GIVEN IT A SHOT."

IT WOULD take more than a decade, though, before that deep-rooted love of Japanese music would push Friedman to throw up the successful career he'd developed as a guitarist in the States, first with Cacophony and then with Megadeth. There was a lot of water that had to flow under the bridge before he was ready to take the plunge. And to do that he had to first get off the island of Hawaii. The helping hand in doing so came from Mike Varney, the guitar-obsessed record label boss who became known for introducing Swedish prodigy Yngwie Malmsteen to the world.

"Mike heard one of my demos and liked it," explains Marty. "It was kinda hard rock with some serious guitar on it. But Mike wanted more guitar, more guitar, and then even *more* guitar. He wanted me to go crazy and really show off – and no one had asked me to do that before. So I ended up on a compilation album of his ['U.S. Metal Vol. II', with a track, 'Angels From The Dust', credited to Vixen], alongside all these Varney guitar-player type guys. I didn't entirely see myself like them, but it was the first time I'd appeared on vinyl, so I did whatever the guy said."

Did you have any fear that you could be typecast as just another shredder?

"Well that would be a legitimate question had I shown up in that stable about four years later. But when I was dealing with Mike Varney there was no shredding thing going on. There was no Yngwie, there were none of those guys who just played really, really fast. Had that been the case I would have definitely shied away from it, but it really didn't exist. And I didn't play like that anyway. I played very fast, but there was always a deep-rooted melodic statement that was always a part of my playing. I was just happy to be appearing on vinyl in any shape or form. I had no idea what it was going to turn into, and at that time I wasn't interested in what was commercial. I thought there would be maybe 10 guys who were going

to like me and that my stuff was never going to be for everyone. I just wanted to make heavy music and was delighted that someone wanted to release it. At that time Metallica had yet to be signed, and even when they were picked up by a small indie label, Megaforce, it completely blew my mind because I thought nothing that heavy would ever be mass market.

"When that whole shredding style became a thing I really wanted to keep away from it, because it became this 'just play as fast as you can' mindless world. And I've spent an entire career trying to distance myself from it. I think I've done a pretty good job of that, but you can't create what's in other people's minds. Some people will always look at you a certain way. I have no real shame about what I've released, though sometimes I get lumped into a box that I don't particularly like to be lumped into. But you can't control that."

MARTY RELEASED two full albums with Hawaii, 1983's 'One Nation Underground' and 1985's 'The Natives Are Restless', but he first came to the attention of the wider metal community in the band Cacophony, where he played alongside another wunderkind, Jason Becker.

"Mike Varney had always said to me that anytime I wanted to do a full solo album he would put it out. I knew that I was only ever going to do music, and having left Hawaii and moved to San Francisco sometime around 1985 I decided that I wanted to record the ultimate guitar album. I was at an age when I was ready to make a musical statement that I believed had something of value to offer. I'd never been that focused on anything in my life before. It was my debut album and I was determined that I was going to show everybody something really new in the world of guitar. So I was about 70, 80 per cent done with the record when Varney says to me, 'You've got meet this kid, Jason.' To be honest the last thing I wanted to do was meet some *kid*. I couldn't have cared less. I listened to his demo – and wasn't that impressed. It was just a guy playing fast. But Varney insisted, and he was the guy releasing my record. I didn't want to rock the boat, so in the end I agreed, and Jason came over to my apartment. He was 16 years old – and I fell in love with the guy. We had a bromance that still continues to this day, because I'd never met anyone as sweet as Jason. At that time he was still very green. I don't think he'd even played a concert before we met, maybe a couple of events in school. But he'd never really been in a band and had never heard of the groups who influenced the guys he was listening to. He was young and he was green, but it quickly became clear to me that he had an unbelievable amount of talent. I would show him these unorthodox phrases that I was working on, and – bam! – he got it.

"Even though nothing on his demo was that impressive I could immediately see that if this guy were in my band, then the sky would be the limit. There were a lot of people who could play mindlessly fast, the same things over and over again. But they couldn't relate to some of the odd stuff I'd throw out, because my influences are so incredibly weird. Most guitarists have the same influences. They listened to Jimmy Page, Hendrix, Jeff Beck, Van Halen, Ritchie Blackmore – and they were playing like that, only faster. But I was learning from these odd Japanese traditional vocalists, and analysing the wavelengths of the way they were singing. I was all over strange instruments, Persian violins and what have you. There was no way to trace what I was doing, so even the good guitar players I met couldn't keep up with me.

"I'd never thought of playing with another guitarist before, because no one could ever grasp it. Not technically. It was just that for better or worse what I was doing was very weird, very eclectic. But Jason

Photos: iconicPix/George Chin; Susumu Miyawaki

MARTY FRIEDMAN

got it and could mimic what I was doing right on the spot. I thought, 'This guy is something else, plus he's just the sweetest person.' My record was almost done, but I knew that if I played live, then he was a guy I needed to play with. So I kind of forced through a way for him to get involved with the record. First I taught him all of my stuff. Then I scrounged through his stuff to find things I could use. There were a couple of bits. And once Jason knew he was going to be on the record he started writing some really interesting things. And we wrote some good stuff together. So it wasn't just throwaway to have him on what turned out to be the 1987 Cacophony album, 'Speed Metal Symphony'. He really did contribute a lot to it."

The Megadeth Years L-R: Marty Friedman (guitar), Dave Mustaine (vocals and guitar), Nick Menza (drums), Dave Ellefson (bass)

"I LOVED MEGADETH, BUT I ALWAYS THOUGHT THE MELODIC ELEMENT WAS THE BAND'S ACHILLES HEEL, WHAT WAS LACKING. THEY HAD THE PROGRESSIVE THING DOWN, THEY HAD THE TRICKY THRASH RIFFS AND ALL THAT VERY COOL WRITING, AND A COOL ATTITUDE. BUT I FELT THEY COULD USE A FRESH, NEW, INNOVATIVE SENSE OF MELODY."

FRIEDMAN AND Becker recorded a second Cacophony album, 1988's 'Go Off', but it also turned out to be the group's swan song.

"I still have mountains of wonderful memories of touring with that band," smiles Marty. "We were best friends, on the road with eight guys in a room and crazy stuff like that. So it was difficult to break up. But Cacophony was pretty eclectic. We looked like your run-of-the-mill glam band, but what we were doing was really out there. We were influenced by Russian classical composers like Igor Stravinsky and Alexander Scriabin, and guys like Philip Glass, all these insane people. But we were putting those influences against a backdrop of heavy metal. It wasn't going to light up the charts.

"But what we'd also noticed was that serious guitar playing had become a big part of all the major rock bands in the world at the time. It was a really big thing, and it wasn't too much of a stretch of the imagination to see that both Jason and I would be able to find a more commercial slot in other bands, rather than playing this very eclectic music. We both knew that as much as we loved each other, if we separated we could divide and conquer. Neither of us wanted to close the door on big, mainstream opportunities. And so we were smart enough to call it quits amicably after the second Cacophony album."

It looked as if the plan had worked to perfection when Jason Becker joined David Lee Roth's band in 1990. But Becker's life, both as a musician and as a human being, would be turned upside down during the recording of Roth's 'A Little Ain't Enough' album that same year when he was diagnosed with the debilitating Lou Gehrig's disease. This would eventually cruelly rob Becker of his ability to play, walk, and speak.

"Nothing has broken my heart in life as much as seeing what happened to Jason," says Marty. "Witnessing him lose his ability to play guitar taught me how fragile everything is. Jason was a healthy guy, a very robust and athletic person, just like me, so it could happen to anybody. But at the same time seeing how Jason has dealt with his illness, and looking at all the thing's he's accomplished, has been the biggest inspiration in my life. I'm constantly working, constantly on the brink of exhaustion, and sometimes I ask myself why I do it. But all it takes is one second thinking of Jason, and how hard it is for him to get his creative thing done, and that gives me more power to keep doing what *I'm* doing. So he's my constant idol and my constant inspiration."

WHILE JASON was landing the David Lee Roth gig, Marty was also looking for his big break. And the need was pressing.

"I was literally homeless right after Cacophony broke up," he says. "I needed to eat, so I would have joined any band of a certain stature at that time. That was when I auditioned for Megadeth, though the exact same week I also had an audition for Madonna's band. Had I not got the Megadeth gig I definitely would have gone to that audition. I probably wouldn't have got the gig, but I would have certainly given it a shot."

As it turned out there was no need, because Megadeth were only too happy to bring Friedman and his extraordinary guitar playing into the fold. Interestingly enough, though, Marty prefaced our interview by saying that he'd prefer to keep talk about Megadeth "to a minimum." You might think that something of a surprise,

because we in the West imagine, falsely, that his time in that group was the commercial highpoint of his career.

"I'm extremely proud of what I helped create in that band," he says. "But it never appealed to me to be credited as 'ex-Megadeth'. I was a fan of the band when I joined, though. I was a fan of Metallica and I was a fan of Megadeth, because they were both exciting and heavy, and influenced by the New Wave Of British Heavy Metal. Megadeth turned out to be a match made in heaven and I couldn't have been luckier, because it was a band that I loved and it was a band where I thought I could contribute my unique flavour, both as a player and as a writer. I thought I could do something with that group and I didn't feel I had to come in and simply replicate what was already there. They had a history and I replicated that, but what I really contributed to was the *future* of the band. I thought I could do something to make Megadeth a better Megadeth, and I feel I did that."

At that time you seemed like a very serious student of the guitar, while Megadeth had a reputation for being difficult, in no small part due to their overt use of heroin. Was that something that gave you pause for thought?

"I wasn't familiar enough with the band to know about all that. I didn't really even know the members' names or who played what, which guitarist played which part. Funnily enough, though, when I first joined they were in a period where everyone was on the straight and narrow, total straight edge. So rather than worrying about them, I was more like 'Wow, these guys are *on* it. They've got it together. They're playing great, they're looking great, they're healthy, fit, and kicking ass.' And here was me, this scraggly, skinny rock dude who eats lollipops for lunch. I was your typical glam dude in Hollywood and these Megadeth guys were all tanned, eating in nice restaurants, driving nice cars, and working out. I was thinking I had to get my act together. Soon enough, though, I learned all about that drug stuff. During the time I was in the band things could certainly have turned out very differently and they wouldn't have had the wonderful career they've had, so fortunately it's a happy ending story. But there *were* a lot of ups and downs."

FRIEDMAN'S FIRST recorded appearance with Megadeth was on 1990's 'Rust In Peace' album, which *Kerrang!* magazine would later say was the album that "set a new standard for heavy metal in the '90s." Despite not receiving any writing credits on the release, Friedman says that "there's a lot of stuff that was written by the four band members." He refuses to elaborate further, preferring to focus on his guitar sound that "has a specific flavour, a smell to it, that permeates what it goes into. Both [band leader and guitarist] Dave Mustaine and [co-producer] Mike Clink really liked spreading that around the music. So a lot of the melodic points came down to me. I loved Megadeth before, but I always thought the melodic element was the band's Achilles heel, what was lacking. They had the progressive thing down, they had the tricky thrash riffs and all that very cool writing, and a cool attitude. But I felt they could use a fresh, new, innovative sense of melody. I was definitely confident I could add that if they were open to it. Thankfully they were, and I think that's what took us away from all the comparisons with Metallica."

Marty's wish to be part of a big rock band was instantly fulfilled when 'Rust In Peace' sold over a million copies in the US alone. What was it like suddenly to have that level of success?

"I loved it. I was all over it, because I grew up admiring and idolising the excesses of rock music, like we all did. In my first band, Deuce, we lived like rock stars. We were getting high all the time, drinking all the time. There was partying, chicks, groupies, trashing hotel rooms, all that stuff. And I loved every second of it. But by the time I was 17 I was *done* with it. I stopped everything and started working on being a *musician*. So in Megadeth I was straight as an arrow. And I loved finally being in the mainstream. I loved playing in front of as many people as possible, and Megadeth was a kick-ass band, so it was easy. Nowadays I do so many incredibly varied things that it requires me to process a lot of new information all the time. In Megadeth once you'd got the setlist down you had a year of just doing that every single night. The other 22 hours were gravy. There was no preparing, no learning. It was just having fun. I loved being in a successful band."

Which prompts the question of why Marty decided to leave Megadeth after five studio albums, releases that in the main bucked the trend of the grunge-obsessed '90s and still sold extremely well.

"It was strictly musical. By the end of the '90s I could see the writing on the wall for me. At that point I was interested in what I saw as more modern music, and I wasn't being utilised very much in Megadeth. What the band was trying to do at the time was something they didn't need a Marty Friedman for. I had a lot more to say musically, though it wasn't necessarily more mainstream. But it wasn't going to happen in Megadeth. To be honest I thought Megadeth's days were numbered. ►

Photos: Getty Images/Mick Hutson/Redferns; Susumu Miyawaki

MARTY FRIEDMAN

Thankfully they weren't, and the band continued to go on to do great things. But they didn't need me for those things, and after leaving the band I was able to make the music I was born to make, do the things I was born to do, and achieve things I would never have been able to achieve in Megadeth.

"I was financially OK, so I was only thinking about music at that point. Being in a major band for 10 years had made me feel validated. I had platinum records on the wall, which told me that what I was doing had some value. I believed in what I had to offer, and I just knew that I would be able to be more useful elsewhere."

The real clincher in helping Friedman plot his next move was the fact that "by 1999 all I was listening to was Japanese music. Nothing American, nothing European. I was obsessed with this music and I wanted to work with those people. I wanted to be a part of the domestic Japanese music scene and it just wasn't going to happen if I stayed in the States. It was simple as that – and that's why I moved."

FRIEDMAN PICKED up his plectrum and walked from Megadeth at the beginning of 2000, then over the next couple of years went on fact-finding missions to Japan – renting for two or three months at a time – trying to figure out what the realities of implanting himself into an entirely alien culture, as well as an alien music scene, actually were.

"It's one thing going to Japan on tour, where you have the record label doing every little thing for you. It's another thing entirely to live there and create a life there. I'd already been studying Japanese as a relatively serious hobby, so I could speak pretty fluently. But the most important thing was that I just *knew* I could do something in Japan. I didn't know what, exactly. But I knew that I wanted to be in the heart of Japanese music. I wanted to play with Japanese artists. I wanted to create Japanese music."

Why did you think you would have something to offer that native musicians who'd spent their whole life immersed in Japan's musical culture didn't?

"This is a very deep and complex story, but I felt I could bring something that they really needed. I'll try to explain. Japanese musicians and artists and writers really admire the music of the West. They really, really do, and they like to have some of that flavour in their music. But Japanese listeners can only accept so much of it. They won't pay attention unless there's something in the music that appeals to Japanese music fans in quite a deep way. That's why J-Pop and Japanese music in general sounds so completely different from what goes on elsewhere. Japanese people get excited when they hear echoes of familiar melodies that have been passed down through generations in their DNA.

"So Japanese musicians admire American musicians, but they also don't really believe they have the authority to play like an American. They have lots of wonderful players, but very few of them actually play with that *authority*. I'm an American player, so it's in my blood to play like an American. So what I thought was that the Japanese could get value out of that, out of me adding a new and innovative angle to Japanese music that all the same worked *with* Japanese music, because I'm very much a fan of Japanese music and I've properly absorbed it. I think I understand Japanese music with a depth that probably no other foreigner really does. That's probably the most concise way I can explain it."

DESPITE THIS deep-rooted self-belief that he had what Japan wanted, Friedman still had to get over one major obstacle.

"In Japan, people who listen to Japanese music don't know much about American music at all. The first gig I got once I moved here was playing in Aikawa Nanase's band. She's a household name here in Japan and I was a huge fan. I had all her records, but Megadeth fans wouldn't be caught dead at one of her concerts, and vice versa for sure. So when people saw me on stage with Aikawa the question was, 'Who's this foreign guy with the long hair playing guitar? Never seen him before.' So it was like starting from zero. I couldn't go in as the guy from Megadeth. I had to start from nothing and make new fans one by one. But eventually it snowballed. I played with a couple of other Japanese artists, and then television happened and that's what broke it all open for me."

How so?

"I was asked to do a pilot for a TV show called *Hebimeta-San* – 'Mr Heavy Metal' in 2004. It was like a send-up variety show about heavy metal music and it really wasn't what I wanted to do, because I was so happy to be playing Japanese music with Japanese artists. But I went to a meeting where they explained the show. They wanted me to do something, and I really felt I was the only guy in the world who *could* do it. You had

Photo: Susumu Miyawaki

to know about heavy metal and be able to play it, but you also had to understand Japanese traditional music and the Japanese music scene in great depth. You had to be able to perform both styles on guitar, as well as speak Japanese and be part of a bunch of comedy skits. And once they'd explained the concept I loved everything about it, except for the fact that it was about heavy metal. I'd really distanced myself from heavy metal. I'd been in that game for 10 years, but now I wanted to be a legitimate part of the Japanese music scene. I was playing big gigs – including the Budokan, which had always been an ambition of mine – and I was really on my way to doing exactly what I wanted to do.

"I was about to turn it down, but they kind of talked me into it. They told me to just try it once. So I did the pilot and the pilot kicked ass, and out of that I got a Japanese management company and I'm still with them today, 17 years later. It was the best move of my entire career by far. Music is still my complete existence, but television has broadened my life experience. Ever since television happened for me I've been able to do so many more things. So just making that little compromise – OK, it's about heavy metal, whatever – opened everything up."

A ROCK musician who's so alive to all possibilities, both musically and culturally, is a rare thing, and that's what makes Friedman's work so interesting. His output as a solo artist has been prolific. His latest album 'Tokyo Jukebox 3' is, as the title intimates, the third instalment of a project that he started back in 2009. These 'Tokyo Jukebox' albums cover Japanese songs with two aims; to add his own unique playing style to the tunes, and to bring songs he loves to a worldwide audience.

"They use the word 'bridge' here quite a lot to describe 'Tokyo Jukebox 3'," he explains. "Because the album takes primarily J-Pop hits that are well-known here in Japan, and then hopefully acts as a bridge for those songs to be heard in the rest of the world."

Don't think for a minute that 'Tokyo Jukebox 3' is pop music, though. With only one vocal track among the 12 songs, the focus is very much on Marty's insane and ferocious playing, bringing life to songs that most of us won't have heard of previously. I've already had hours of fun discovering the original versions of songs like 'Gurenge', originally recorded by LiSA, 'Shukumei' from Official Hige Dandism, and Sekai No Owari's 'Sazanka', and appreciating the vast breadth of styles that Marty has interpreted.

"People like me who collect music really love it when other people are interested in our record collections. We love to share music we feel is important, so I'm kind of doing that as a musician. When I fell for Japanese music I got so much enjoyment out of it, so I guess if I can share it with people who aren't aware of it, well that's great. And it's one thing to talk about artists you like, but it's another thing entirely to record it and put your own stamp on it.

"When most artists are creating their music, they're just kind of regurgitating what they love. This is different, because my love for music in general and the experiences I've had in Japan are joined together and come out in this music. I couldn't have had those experiences had I lived in another country, no matter how much I love Japanese music. So being here is very important. This is the third of my 'Tokyo Jukebox' records and there are a lot of Marty-isms on all of them, so when the majority of people outside of Japan hear these songs they just think they're my latest tunes – and that's the way to get them into what's behind the concept. But if those listeners then go on to discover the Japanese artists behind these songs, then so much the better."

MARTY HAS become famous in Tokyo for playing the opening ceremony of the city's marathon for the last four years. "And I always played stuff from my other 'Jukebox' records, famous Japanese songs that were designed to get the runners going. I do a lot of running myself and I can't move without motivating music in my earphones. So this time around I really wanted to make an album full of motivating, uplifting stuff that makes you happy, makes you feel powerful, and makes you work harder just at the point when you want to give up."

> "I JUST KNEW I COULD DO SOMETHING IN JAPAN. I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT, EXACTLY. BUT I KNEW THAT I WANTED TO BE IN THE HEART OF JAPANESE MUSIC. I WANTED TO PLAY WITH JAPANESE ARTISTS. I WANTED TO CREATE JAPANESE MUSIC."

Marty's life today at the age of 58 is, of course, entirely different to that of the young player who first made his mark on Shrapnel Records. So I finish our enthralling conversation by asking whether he could ever in his wildest dreams have imagined where he'd be today.

"Well, I could certainly have anticipated that I'd be playing in a rock band. But I could never have anticipated being here and doing the things I'm doing and caring about the stuff I care about. When I was a kid I didn't know Japan and I didn't care about Japan. It was just a faraway place, and all I wanted to do was play rock'n'roll. I never expected that I would live outside of the States. But I think all musicians and artists owe it to themselves – they have a responsibility, really – to follow what they think is good for them artistically. And it's risky, because upping and going to Japan probably wasn't the smartest thing for someone who had a solid career in the US music business to do. But I owed it to myself as an artist to try to pursue the muse. And at the end of the day I'm extremely glad that I did."

ZEP AT KNEBWORTH '79

IN LATE MAY OF 1974 rock promoter Freddy Bannister thought he'd pulled off a sizeable coup when he proudly announced that he'd secured Led Zeppelin as bill toppers for a one-day event to be staged within the grounds of Knebworth House, a stately home near Stevenage in England. Bannister had previously promoted Zeppelin at the 1970 Bath Festival. Four years later he was well aware that they were now the hottest ticket going. Riding on the back of a hugely successful US tour the previous year, Zep's worldwide popularity had reached new heights. Their sixth album, 'Physical Graffiti' – set to be a double – was eagerly anticipated, as was their much-talked-about forthcoming feature film *The Song Remains The Same*.

As it turned out, work on those two projects would prevent Led Zeppelin from performing live anywhere in 1974, including the prospective Knebworth show. Much to Bannister's disappointment Zeppelin manager Peter Grant decided against Zep headlining the gig. Grant claimed that no confirming documents were ever signed, and Bannister went ahead with his plan without Zep onboard. On 20 July, a bill that included The Allman Brothers Band headlining over The Doobie Brothers, Van Morrison, Tim Buckley, The Sensational Alex Harvey Band, and The Mahavishnu Orchestra performed the first one-day festival

SWAN SONG

In 1979 trendy critics and snotty-nosed punks hated **Led Zeppelin**. But the band's two monster shows at Knebworth in August of that year showed who the real kings of rock still were. In a *Rock Candy Mag* exclusive, Zeppelin expert *Dave Lewis* (left) unravels the fascinating story behind these two seminal gigs – the last the original band would play in the UK – in intricate detail...

Photo: Getty Images/Pete Still/Redferns

at Knebworth – an event that would go on to become a traditional date on the British rock calendar.

Five years later Freddy Bannister finally got his men. The now well-established Knebworth Festival proved to be an offer that Grant and Zep couldn't refuse, not least because they needed to stage a major comeback. The band hadn't performed in the UK since 1975, or anywhere else since 1977. And half a decade on from that initial Knebworth offer it was a very different Led Zeppelin that geared up for live performance in the summer of 1979.

After completing the final night of a triumphant five-show stint at London's Earls Court Arena in May 1975, Zep's next plan had been to return to the US for a series of major outdoor appearances. But a serious car crash on the Greek island of Rhodes that involved Robert Plant and his wife Maureen in August 1975 curtailed all those plans. With Plant recovering from multiple injuries to his ankle and elbow, the band used the singer's recuperation period – where he even spent time in a wheelchair – to record their next album, 'Presence', at Munich's Musicland Studios.

When Plant had finally recovered enough to start performing live again, in April 1977 Zeppelin embarked on a massive, 44-date US tour over three legs. Unfortunately there was more trouble and tragedy

ZEP AT KNEBWORTH '79

ahead. In late July a backstage fight at the first Oakland Coliseum show – involving Peter Grant, Zep crew members, drummer John Bonham, and promoter Bill Graham's road crew – marred the band's two appearances at the venue. But even these events would be totally overshadowed a few days later as Zeppelin awaited a massive Superdome show in New Orleans. It was there that Robert Plant received a phone call with devastating news. His five-year-old son Karac had died of a stomach virus back in England. The tour was immediately cancelled.

The likelihood of Led Zeppelin ever performing again was under serious doubt as Robert retreated to his Midlands home. For months he questioned both his role in the band and his future. Close confidants believed Robert when he said he could never return, and was considering quitting performing to go into teaching.

AFTER MUCH persuasion Plant agreed to reconvene with his group in May 1978. Robert's decision to return to the fold was greatly influenced by John Bonham, who cajoled him into getting back to doing what he did best.

"I didn't want to leave my family," reflected Robert to Barney Hoskyns in 2003. "And I also didn't know if it was worth it. John came over and told me all the reasons why it *was* worth it.

"He had the history with me outside of the success. He was the only one who hugged me and helped me at all. He said, 'C'mon, we're going to go down to Clearwell to try some writing.'"

So the first seeds of a Led Zeppelin comeback were sown at Clearwell Castle, near the Forest of Dean in Gloucestershire. Deep Purple had worked there previously. This initial reunion did spark Zep into working on new material, though everything was still very tentative.

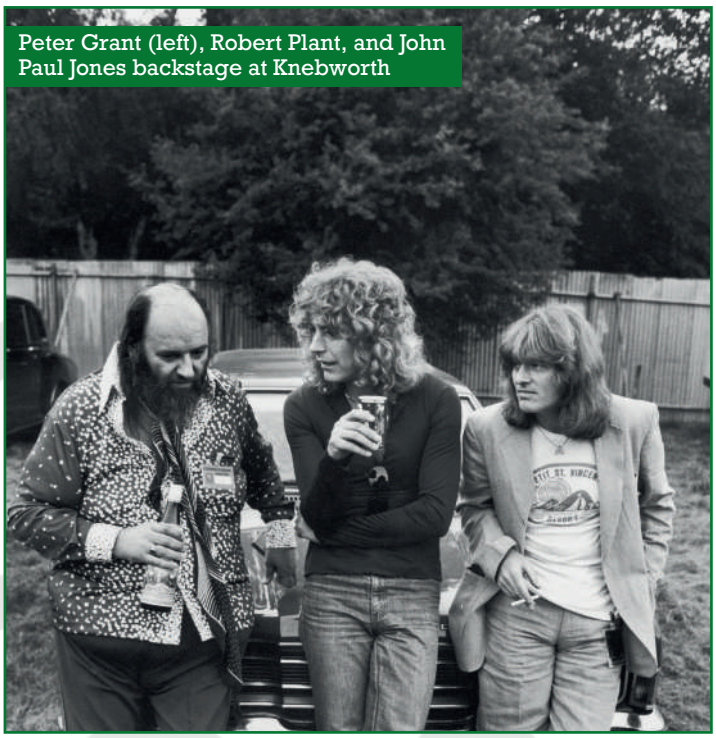
In early autumn of '78 the band resumed rehearsals at Ezyhire, a North London studio. And now there was a clear purpose. On 6 November Zep flew to Stockholm for a series of Monday-through-Friday sessions at Abba's famous Polar Studios that would result in the 'In Through The Out Door' album, eventually released on 15 August 1979. For these sessions John Paul Jones had various keyboard-led ideas and was anxious to develop them in the studio on his new GX1 keyboard synth set-up. "I was one of the first to get one I think – it was Stevie Wonder and myself," recalled Jones. "The sound you could get out of it was, at the time, very inspiring."

Jones would end up dominating tracks such as the lengthy 'Carouselambra' and 'All My Love'. John Paul and Robert were often at the studio first, which most likely led to both musicians exerting a strong influence on the material. "The band was divided between people who could turn up at recording sessions on time and people who couldn't," claimed JPJ. "I'd got the GX1 installed and I wasn't just going to look at it. I worked really hard on 'In The Evening' and 'Carouselambra'. It was a transitional period. It was a chance to see what else we could do."

Guitarist Jimmy Page was reported as being distant and less enthusiastic about what was happening, showing particular indifference to Plant's mellow leanings on the song 'All My Love'. Page's creative spark, however, was

certainly in evidence on the new-wave-inspired 'Wearing And Tearing', a number that didn't make the final album and subsequently showed up on the posthumous 'Coda' set in 1982. While in Stockholm Page and Plant both checked out concerts by Jerry Lee Lewis and Duane Eddy, perhaps leading to two rockabilly-ish songs, 'Hot Dog' and 'Darlene' (another outtake that finally appeared on 'Coda').

Years later Jimmy told Barney Hoskyns: "There are a lot of people who say, 'Oh Jimmy wasn't in very good shape,' or whatever. But what I do know is that 'Presence' was recorded and mixed in three weeks and 'In Through The Out Door' was done in a little over three weeks. So I couldn't have been in that bad a shape or I'd never have been able to play and keep my head together to do this."



Peter Grant (left), Robert Plant, and John Paul Jones backstage at Knebworth

"I SAID, 'F*CK DOING A TOUR. WE'RE THE BIGGEST BAND IN THE WORLD, SO WE'D BETTER GET OUT THERE AND SHOW THEM WE STILL ARE.' I SAID KNEBWORTH WAS THE GIG, AND I RECKONED WE COULD SELL OUT TWO DATES. I WAS ABSOLUTELY CONFIDENT."
ZEP MANAGER PETER GRANT

WITH A new album ready for release, all that was required to seal Led Zeppelin's return to active duty was to start performing live again. There were rumours that they'd work themselves into shape with a series of low-key gigs in Europe and unannounced club dates in the UK. Plant had little desire to face a US tour at that time, so clearly any comeback would have to be nearer to home.

In the intervening years since their last UK appearances back in 1975, the whole fabric of the British music scene had undergone massive change. The punk movement, and the rise of groups like the Sex Pistols and The Clash in 1977, ushered in a new 'back to basics' approach that would denounce the so-called dinosaur bands and deem them extinct. The Clash's Paul Simonon commented: "Led Zeppelin? I don't need to hear their music. Just looking at their album sleeves makes me want to throw up." It was the sort of snarky comment Zep and their peers would be regularly subjected to.

Perhaps more of a direct threat to Zeppelin's standing, however, was the rise of the New Wave Of British Heavy Metal. This movement saw bands such as Iron Maiden, Def Leppard, Diamond Head, and Saxon emerging. They were tight, taut purveyors of heavy rock, heavily influenced by Zep, but also bringing youthful energy and aggression to the table. These groups were building a big following in UK venues up and down the country at the same time that Zep were contemplating their collective navels and trying to decide what to do next.

Well aware of the need to reclaim their status as rock's top dogs, manager Peter Grant decided that Zeppelin had to return in the grandest style possible. He saw Knebworth as the obvious answer, and after negotiations with Freddy Bannister a comeback date of 4 August was scheduled, with a prospective second date held for a week later. The band's fee for one night performing was reported to be the largest ever paid to one single act at that time – a reputed £1 million.

The initial show was announced on Britain's most traditional TV rock show, *The Old Grey Whistle Test*, on 22 May. A couple of double-page-spread adverts in the music press followed, and demand for tickets for the first announced date was strong. The second date on 11 August was quickly confirmed.

"We didn't want to start all over again," Peter Grant reflected. "So I said, 'F*ck doing a tour. We're the biggest band in the world, so we'd better get out there and show them we still are.' I said Knebworth was the gig, and I reckoned we could sell out two dates. I was absolutely confident."

Zeppelin's return also offered a perfect solution for Freddy Bannister. He'd been looking for a really big name to headline the 1979 Knebworth show and initially had ideas to approach both The Eagles and Pink Floyd. But Zeppelin was a much bigger coup to pull off.

In early June all four members of the group convened in the grounds of the Knebworth site for a formal photo session with the Hipgnosis design team. The arrival of a stripper to keep them entertained made for a jovial shoot. Freddy Bannister, meanwhile, was trying to sort out the rest of the line-up for the two dates. Both shows had gone on sale with Zeppelin as the sole named attraction.

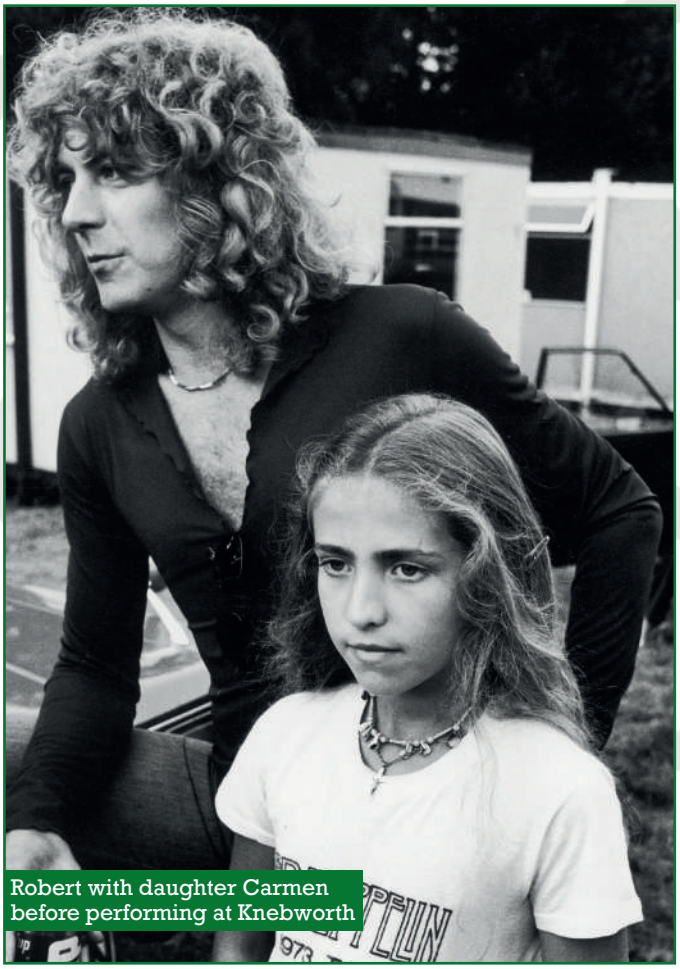
"The line-up we'd hoped for was Fairport, Dire

Photos: Ian Avery; Getty Images/Ian Cook/The LIFE Images Collection; Phil Tattershall; Dave Lewis

ZEP AT KNEBWORTH '79

Straits, Little Feat, and Joni Mitchell," Jimmy stated in a *Melody Maker* interview with Steve Gett. But other artists rumoured to be playing included Ian Dury, Roxy Music, JJ Cale, Bob Seger, The Boomtown Rats, Aerosmith, BB King, and Van Morrison. Eventually Fairport Convention were confirmed for the 4 August date, while Chas & Dave, Southside Johnny And The Asbury Jukes, and Todd Rundgren's Utopia were slated for both gigs. The Marshall Tucker Band were also billed, but dropped out at the last minute with Commander Cody stepping in.

The second-on-the-bill spot on 11 August was taken by Grant's choice of The New Barbarians, a part-time pick-up band fronted by Rolling Stones guitarists Ronnie Wood and Keith Richards. The confirmed line-ups lacked any big name attractions beside Zeppelin. Certainly the support acts weren't going to pose any threat to the headliners.



Robert with daughter Carmen before performing at Knebworth

"I PATROLLED IN A JEEP THE NIGHT BEFORE THE FIRST GIG. PEOPLE HAD PUSHED DOWN STONE PILLARS TO GET IN EARLY. IT WAS A PHENOMENALLY POWERFUL THING."
ROBERT PLANT

ZEP BEGAN rehearsals in June at the massive Bray Film Studios in Berkshire. Gerry Anderson's *Space 1999* sci-fi TV programme was filmed there, while more recently it had been used for shooting the blockbuster film *Alien*. Then a week before the Knebworth shows the band played two warm-up gigs in Copenhagen, Denmark at the 2,000 capacity Falkoner Theatre. On Monday 23 July the Zeppelin entourage flew to Denmark to set up for the group's first gigs in 24 months. On the first night there were problems putting a new lighting rig together. It was too big for the venue, resulting in a blown generator and a delay of almost two hours before the band took to the stage. Erik Von Lustbaden, reporting for music paper *Sounds*, described the show as dazzling, staggering and sometimes awful.

"The subdued lights were still much better than most bands will ever have," the writer noted. "I was just about converted to Zeppelin mania during 'Kashmir', the powerful ascending riff and the group's sense of simple melody and repetition combining to at least give an inkling of why they've attained such legendary status. Dazzling. Another Page solo, all without any backing. I went for a p*ss, bought a bar of chocolate, ate it, had a sit down, made some notes, went back in, and he was still playing it!"

The next night the band fared better with the light show. But reviewing the gig for another UK music paper, *NME*, Eric Kornfeldt didn't hold back. Under the headline "Dazed 'n' Abused" he wrote: "They appeared sloppy and unrehearsed, sometimes seeming awkwardly lost, bewildered, stiff, and reluctant to play. They were no more than a quartet of uninspired old men, a relic from the past. There was so little feeling inherent in the set that for the most part it was like watching a fully automated factory producing an endless string of chords that neither musicians nor audience cared about." Zeppelin were clearly no longer everybody's darlings.

THE GROUP arrived at Knebworth in the early afternoon of 2 August for a soundcheck. John Bonham's son Jason was there, and much to John Paul Jones's surprise he stepped up to the kit to play 'Trampled Underfoot' with the band. "We were running through the soundcheck and I could see Bonzo out front, and I thought, 'Wait a minute. Who's playing drums?' Then I turned around and it was Jason. He'd taken over the drum kit!"

Zeppelin's many thousands of fans descended on Knebworth for the first show on 4 August, filling the specially prepared campsite the night before. Banners such as 'Jimmy Page Lord Of The Strings' indicated the depth of loyalty the band still commanded. The gates were due to open in the early morning of the following day, but by midnight there was already a huge crush near the turnstiles. This forced the event's security team to allow early entry to the grounds, something Robert Plant witnessed for himself as he told Tom Hibbert in *Q* magazine back in 1988. "I patrolled the grounds the night of the first gig – I went out with some people in a jeep," the singer recalled. "People had pushed the stone pillars down, with metal gates attached, because they wanted to get in early. It was a phenomenally powerful thing."

ON SATURDAY 4 August 1979, and after a day of erratic performances from the supporting acts, Led Zeppelin took to the stage at 9.40pm. Page's ringing guitar chord that preceded 'The Song Remains The Same' was greeted by a huge roar as the vivid green light behind the stage gave way to a giant video screen relaying the show on a backdrop for all to see. It was pure Zeppelin theatre.

Though obviously nervous, Plant gained confidence as the set developed, and by the end his on-stage bravado

JPJ and Jimmy pumping out those Knebworth vibes

was back to its best. Significantly, one of the best performances of the night was 'In The Evening', set to be the opening track on the forthcoming 'In Through The Out Door' album. With its opening tympani-led drama and staccato Page riffing, it was proof that a full flight Zep could still be a match for anyone.

John Bonham seemed in his element, pushing the band along with none of the doubts and insecurities that would hinder him in the coming months. As Plant put it, "Some of us might have been struggling at the time, but Bonzo still had it." Page performed his 'White Summer'/'Black Mountain Side' showcase alone in the spotlight, and the laser show that shrouded him during his violin bow solo drew gasps from the vast audience.

Expected favourites such as 'Since I've Been Loving You', 'No Quarter', 'Kashmir', 'Achilles Last Stand', 'Stairway To Heaven', and 'Rock And Roll' were all rapturously received, while an inventive re-modelling of 'Whole Lotta Love' was another highlight.

After the encore of 'Rock And Roll' the crowd burst into a spontaneous rendition of the football anthem 'You'll Never Walk Alone'. Page reflected: "It was absolutely incredible. I'll tell you there were a few tears in the eyes at that point." Plant was also similarly moved: "I don't know if I was breathing a sigh of relief because we'd got to the end of the show in one piece, or whether we'd actually bought some time to keep going." Looking back in 2019 John Paul Jones told me: "What comes to mind is how strange it was playing in front of such a huge audience again. We'd been away a long time. Looking back I thought it was pretty good."

KNEBWORTH PARK
SAT. 4th & SAT. 11th AUGUST 1979 11AM to 11PM
LED ZEPPELIN
The NEW BARBARIANS
TODD RUNDGREN AND UTOPIA
SOUTHSIDE JOHNNY AND THE ASBURY JUKES
MARSHALL TUCKER BAND
CHAS AND DAVE
FAIRPORT CONVENTION
Co-ordination And Fun From Nicky Horne

ONE FAN who vividly remembers this first Knebworth show was Def Leppard frontman Joe Elliott. Talking to DJ Johnnie Walker on the BBC's Radio 1 in 2018 he recalled: "My first true Led Zeppelin moment was when they played the first of the two shows at Knebworth. Def Leppard had played the Newcastle Mayfair on the Friday and we drove all the way down overnight. Parked up the van probably about 6am. Slept in the van until maybe 8, 8.30am. Then we put a blanket down on the grass and passed out. Missed most of the opening acts. Definitely watched Todd Rundgren's Utopia. And then Zeppelin came on and it was a religious experience. It really was. We were anywhere between 15 and 20 years old. It was the biggest show I'd ever seen. And the next day we went back to Sheffield and that Sunday morning we signed our record deal."

Zeppelin's performance had more than won over Def Leppard and the rest of the vast crowd. But the weekly music press was another matter. "Ghosts Of Progressive Rock Past" read the headline in the *NME* as writer Paul Morley noted that, "Led Zeppelin didn't do enough to live up to their legend. What they did do was prove they're a clever, conceited, old fashioned rock'n'roll group who still have drastic lapses in taste and discipline."

Photos: Getty Images/Ian Cook/The LIFE Images Collection; Stuart Whitehead

ZEP AT KNEBWORTH '79

Robert Plant was clearly aware of the negative press and was particularly defensive in some of his on-stage comments on the second date on 11 August. "Well, it didn't rain, but it rained on us from one or two sources in the week. Well we're gonna take it and stick it right where it belongs."

That particular stance riled the once-supportive Nick Kent. Reviewing the second show in the *NME* he wrote: "For the first half one couldn't help but be impressed by Zep's powerdrive; at times they were breathtaking. But the mixture of Robert Plant's frequent snipes at their less-than-totally-adulatory press coverage and the elongated virtuosity of the likes of 'No Quarter' ultimately left me cold and bored. Zep are like a behemoth, impressive but something from the past – almost a museum piece."

Phil Sutcliffe was kinder in his review in *Sounds*. "Consider. What would you feel if you saw a dinosaur coming down your street? Surprise, fear, fascination, awe, excitement. All of these things. It's by no means all bad to be a living fossil. And from the impartial Zeppelin watcher's point of view it's futile to demand that they change, that they be anything other than their old selves. So, at this second Knebworth show, it has to be acknowledged that within terms which bear little comparison to The Clash, or Dylan, or Talking Heads, or Ian Dury, this was a passable Led Zeppelin concert."

For the second show 'Ten Years Gone' was dropped from the previous week's performance, while 'Heartbreaker' was replaced as an encore by 'Communication Breakdown'. They may have been less nervous on 11 August, but this second performance slightly lacked the emotional intensity of the first show. Nevertheless, it was still a very impressive performance. As the band came back for an encore of 'Rock And Roll' Plant humorously said to the crowd, "Good evening, can you do the dinosaur rock?" Plant's final words were, "We'll see you soon. Very soon. Don't know about the Marquee, but somewhere soon."

Zep at Knebworth. The fans loved it. The press not so much

DO NOT TEAR PERFORATION AS THIS WILL INVALIDATE TICKET
KNEBWORTH PARK Nr STEVENAGE HERTS
SATURDAY 4th AUGUST 11.00 a.m.—11.00 p.m.
FREDERICK BANNISTER IN ASSOCIATION WITH PETER GRANT PRESENTS
LED ZEPPELIN
at Knebworth
ADV. BOOKING PRICE £7.50 inc. VAT.
TICKET No E 03664
TICKET No. E 03664
WARNING The cost of this ticket includes VAT and ticket-sellers commission DO NOT PAY MORE

DO NOT TEAR PERFORATION AS THIS WILL INVALIDATE TICKET
KNEBWORTH PARK Nr STEVENAGE HERTS
SATURDAY 11th AUGUST 11.00 a.m.—11.00 p.m.
FREDERICK BANNISTER IN ASSOCIATION WITH PETER GRANT PRESENTS
LED ZEPPELIN
at Knebworth The song remains the same
ADV. BOOKING PRICE £7.50 inc. VAT.
TICKET No. B 08674
TICKET No. B 08674
WARNING The cost of this ticket includes VAT and Ticket-sellers commission DO NOT PAY MORE

IN AN interview with me in 1993 Peter Grant observed: "The performance was a bit rusty. We'd been to Copenhagen to get the sound sorted out. It was always one of my strategies to warm up in Europe. I thought the laser bow light show was most effective. Jimmy worked really hard with the lighting guys to get the exact order in which he'd project the bow outwards to make sure the laser effects were spot on. That was a fantastic moment to watch from the side of the stage."

Both Knebworth shows were professionally recorded on the Rolling Stones' mobile studio with George Chkianz engineering. They were also filmed for the giant video screens that were used on both dates. There was a plan for the footage to be used in a TV special, which is one of the reasons why the group dressed the same on both dates. Nothing came of that, although the 11 August 'Hot Dog' clip was edited for use as an in-store promo trailer for the new album.

IN SHORT, the crowd loved Zep at Knebworth and the critics hated it. Not all that much had changed in that respect. Neither had the off-stage controversy that always seemed to follow Led Zeppelin around.

Tensions had been running high between Peter Grant and Freddy Bannister all the way through the whole Zeppelin/Knebworth saga. With so much money potentially to be made, and with both sides fighting their corner, perhaps that was inevitable. After the event there was a dispute between Grant and Bannister about attendance figures, and therefore how much money had actually been generated. This query over ticket sales prompted Grant to send aerial pictures taken by photographer Neal Preston to a monitoring lab to establish the true extent of the attendance. Grant claimed 218,000 people were counted from the photos supplied for 4 August, and 187,000 for the second week. The license was only for 100,000. Bannister allegedly claimed that 104,000 attended the

first show. For the second show Grant brought in his own staff to count tickets and man turnstiles.

In his book about promoting the Knebworth festivals, *There Must Be A Better Way*, Bannister detailed his troubles with Grant. "The facts are that we received 104,000 paid admissions for the first show and 40,000 for the second. If you allow comps and a few gatecrashers you can probably round it up to 150,000, still a very impressive number to draw over two consecutive weekends. We didn't cheat Led Zeppelin out of one penny."

At a meeting at the Dorchester Hotel in London a month after the shows Grant asked Bannister to sign an open letter explaining some of the major issues the two parties had clashed over. The letter, dated 20 September 1979 and signed by Bannister, confirmed that Zeppelin had voluntarily reduced their guarantee "in the event there was [sic] insufficient funds to pay everyone." Bannister also admitted in the letter that he hadn't been able to cover all his costs for the shows, so not everyone had been paid. Despite being unhappy at being asked to put his name to this open letter Bannister agreed.

"I wasn't exactly thrilled with the request," he explained. "However after all the unpleasantness and worry and innuendo I was scared for the safety of my family. I just wanted everything behind me, and to get on with my life. So I agreed to sign the statement."

John Bonham appeared on one more Zep tour after Knebworth, including this performance in Munich on 5 July 1980

Peter Grant was, of course, renowned as a pugnacious guy, somebody you wouldn't want to get on the wrong side of, as that other promoter Bill Graham had found to his cost. Perhaps knowing the character of Zep's manager it's not surprising that Bannister felt intimidated enough to sign the letter, regardless of its contents.

The Knebworth/Led Zeppelin adventure eventually forced Bannister's Tedoar company into liquidation, and this allegedly left unpaid bills of £50,000 for the police and £2,000 to Stevenage Borough Council. Knebworth owner David Cobbald was also fined £150 by the North Hertfordshire Council for alleged breaches of the festival license, overrunning time restrictions, and noise problems. At one point it looked like the level of complaints from the local authorities would put future festivals at the site in doubt. However the following year Capital Radio promoted the event with The Beach Boys headlining.

Zeppelin's dealings with Freddy Bannister seem pretty unpleasant. Bannister said his issues with Grant over Knebworth forced him to quickly retire. Why? "In a word – fear. Peter Grant was in such a terrible state, both mentally and physically, we thought he was on his way out and would be delighted to take us with him."

'IN THROUGH The Out Door' was released a week after the second Knebworth show. So called because, as Page had it, "That's the hardest way to get back in," the album was well received around the world. It made number one in the UK in its first week – earning gold status by the year's end – and instantly hitting the Top 10 in Canada, Japan, New Zealand, Australia, and France.

It was in America, though, that the album really flew. Its release was heralded as a saviour to a flagging US record industry, generating massive footfall in stores and holding the top spot on the album charts for seven weeks. Even more remarkable was the renewed demand for older Zep albums. Atlantic shifted a staggering one million back-catalogue albums during September 1979 alone, a situation that resulted in Led Zeppelin's entire catalogue appearing on the *Billboard* Top 200 during the weeks of 27 October and 3 November. This beat the previous record for the most albums on the chart, which had been set in 1975 – by Led Zeppelin.

What the band really needed to do after Knebworth was capitalise on the success of their comeback and those significant album sales. Judging by Zep's success in the annual *Melody Maker* readers' poll in November of 1979 the band's audience was still incredibly loyal. Zeppelin were voted top in seven categories in the poll. On 28 November Robert, Bonzo, and John Paul Jones – together with Peter Grant, tour manager Richard Cole, and various personnel from their Swan Song label – attended the *Melody Maker* Poll Awards at London's Waldorf Hotel. They won Best Band, Best Live Act, Best Album, Best Male Singer, Best Guitarist, Best Producer, and Best Composers.

Later that year, on 29 December, there was an on-stage sighting of Plant, Jones, and Bonham when they appeared in an all-star line-up called Rockestra alongside Paul McCartney and Wings at a Concert for Kampuchea gig in London. Plant also performed 'Little Sister' with Dave Edmunds' Rockpile at the concert.

FANS WERE hoping for more UK dates from Zeppelin, but instead there was another prolonged period of

Photos: Getty Images/Graham Wiltshire/Redferns; Getty Images/FG/Bauer-Griffin

ZEP AT KNEBWORTH '79

silence. As the 1980s dawned there was no clear indication of where the band might head next. However, in April they began rehearsing again at the Rainbow and New Victoria theatres in London.

Grant assembled an itinerary for a low-key tour of Europe. The idea was to play smaller places with average capacities of 4,000 using a cut down PA. By avoiding the UK the band hoped to escape the negative press attention that had dogged Knebworth. For his part, Grant hoped that Zeppelin being on the road again would act as an incentive for Plant to sanction a full-scale return to the US.

The tour kicked off in Dortmund, Germany on 17 June under the slogan 'Led Zeppelin Tour Over Europe 1980', and took in 14 dates across Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Switzerland. By and large things went well, though there was a worrying incident when John Bonham collapsed in Nuremberg, curtailing a gig after just 15 short minutes. The set list for the tour saw the band cut their traditionally super-lengthy show down to a much more manageable two hours. Gone were the marathon versions of 'Dazed And Confused' and 'No Quarter', to be replaced by the likes of 'Train Kept A-Rollin', the old Johnny Burnette stormer the group had used as a set opener on their early tours. There was a definite sense of rejuvenation about these performances

"THE REALITY OF KNEBWORTH WAS THAT IT WAS FANTASTIC. WE HAD TO COME IN BY HELICOPTER AND YOU COULD JUST SEE THIS HUGE SEA OF PEOPLE. IT WAS ASTONISHING. EVERYTHING ABOUT THOSE TWO KNEBWORTH SHOWS WAS A BIG DEAL, AND IT CAME ACROSS IN SOME VERY EVOCATIVE AREAS WITHIN THE MUSIC."
JIMMY PAGE

Press coverage was minimal, though they did garner a positive review from Steve Gett in *Melody Maker*. "After Knebworth we did that European tour where we slimmed it down," John Paul Jones recalled in an interview with *TBL* magazine. "I'd describe that as the 'cut the waffle' tour. The fans' reaction to Knebworth spurred us on to do that."

What those 14 dates didn't encourage, though, was any further UK activity, despite a golden opportunity to display this new, focused intent to a British audience.

On 16 August 1980 promoters Paul Loasby and Maurice Jones staged the first one-day Monsters Of Rock festival at Donington Park, within the grounds of a Leicestershire racetrack. The bill featured New York City-based heavy rockers Touch and Riot, rising NWOBHM stars Saxon, Canadian veterans April Wine, German metallers Scorpions, Judas Priest, and at the top of the bill, Rainbow. The crowd was estimated to be somewhere between 40,000 and 60,000. After those European dates Zep would have been road-worthy, and had they been bold enough to appear at MOR they could have taken on their rivals and proved they could still mix it with the loudest and proudest. In Europe they'd proved they could still be a lean, mean rock'n'roll band without the big effects and lasers. The Monsters Of Rock festival would have been a great platform to put Led Zeppelin back at the forefront of the UK scene. But it wasn't to be. Instead, Peter Grant went for the big bucks.

The European jaunt provided enough motivation for Plant to reconsider his decision on touring the States. "I didn't put any pressure on him and he kept saying to Bonzo, 'What's G said about America?' I hoped being up there on stage would give him the necessary lift to do it," said Grant.

IN FACT Plant harboured reservations about the long-term future of the group.

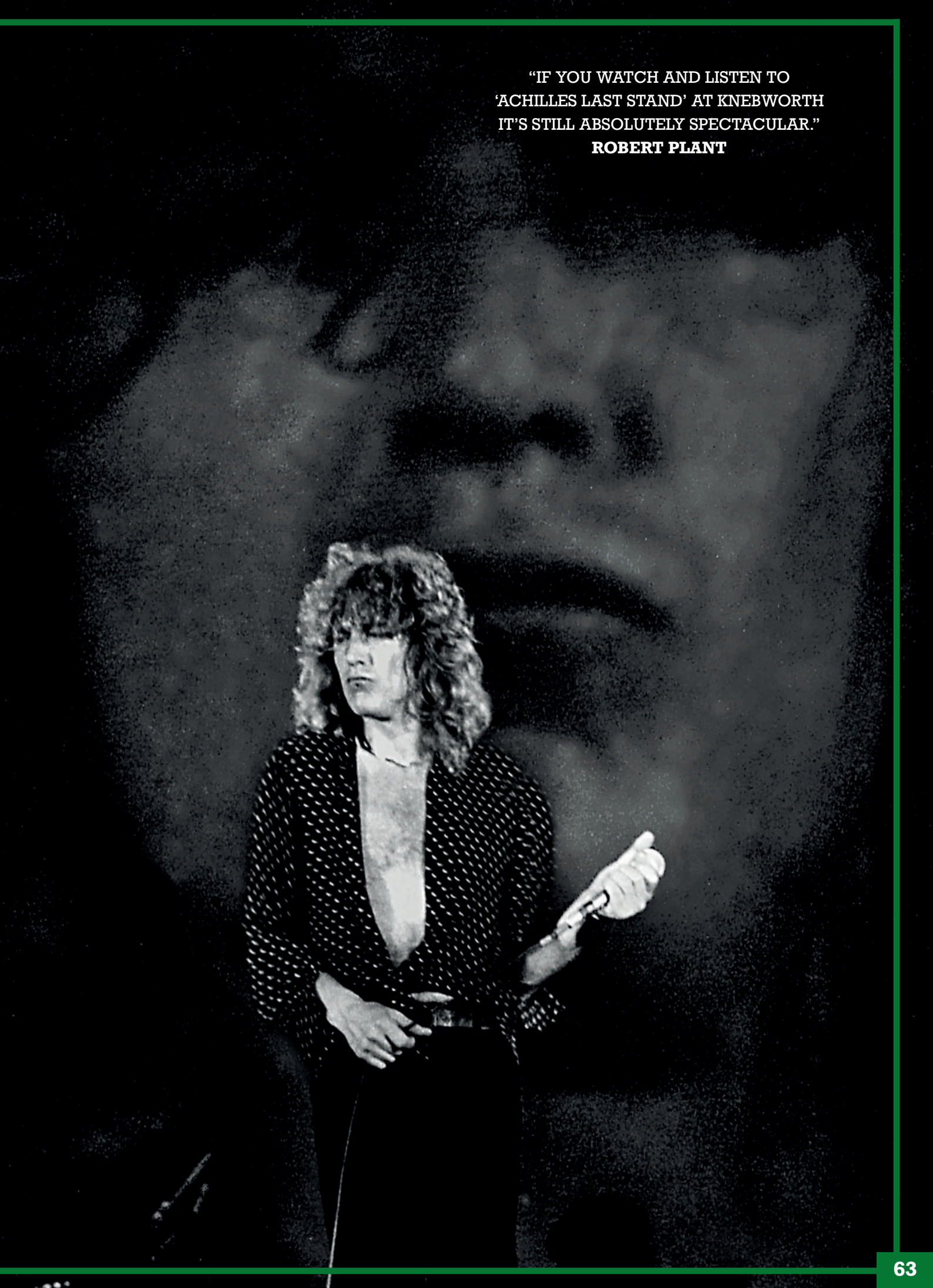
"By the time we got to the 'In Through The Out Door' album, I was so furtive," he admitted in 1995. "And I think Jimmy was too. Maybe if we'd communicated then as we do now, perhaps we could have gone on working together. But in that period I was beginning to think I could do fresh things outside of the group."

In the end Robert decided to continue in the band. In early July he told Peter Grant he'd be willing to tour the US in the autumn – but for a maximum of four weeks only.

At the time Page had his own ideas as to where they may have headed musically. In 2020 talking to *Rolling Stone* magazine he observed: "After the sessions for 'In Through The Out Door' John Bonham and I were discussing how we wanted to do a sort of more riff-based entity, harder and trickier. And, of course, I know what sort of drums he liked to play. He liked to play really hard; stuff that when people heard it, they'd go, 'Wow, what's that?' I like to do that as well with the guitar parts.

"We had a bit of an idea of what we might do, but basically, it was not going to be a keyboard album. There would be keyboards on it maybe, but it was going to go more into another vein. It would be different to anything that had been there before."

Photos: Getty Images/FG/Bauer-Griffin; Stuart Whitehead



"IF YOU WATCH AND LISTEN TO 'ACHILLES LAST STAND' AT KNEBWORTH IT'S STILL ABSOLUTELY SPECTACULAR."
ROBERT PLANT

ZEP AT KNEBWORTH '79

ON 11 September Swan Song announced that Zep would be touring the US that autumn under the bold heading 'Led Zeppelin The 1980s Part One'.

Grant recalled: "I knew we couldn't cover everywhere in four weeks, which was Robert's condition. But once we got over there and got back into the swing I thought we'd be fine. So it was Part One of what I hoped would be further visits."

The basic plan was to cover the Midwest and Northeast (excluding New York City) in October and November, before returning to the US for a West Coast tour early in 1981. UK dates were pencilled in for the spring. The band's first North American dates in over three years would take in 19 shows commencing in Montreal, Canada on 17 October, and ending with four nights at Chicago Stadium over 10, 12, 13 and 15 November.

On 24 September John Bonham left his Worcestershire home to meet up with the rest of the group for initial rehearsals at Bray Studios in Berkshire. He began drinking quadruple measures of vodka at a stop-off in a pub on the way.

Bonham had been feeling tentative about going back to the States and, as ever, he was nervous about preparing for a tour. Realising there would be little in the way of serious rehearsing that night, Page and Plant called an early-evening halt. The band members all returned to Page's Windsor home.

On the morning of 25 September Page's personal assistant Rick Hobbs checked on Bonham's room at around 8am. The drummer appeared to be sleeping fine. At 1.45pm Zep soundman Benji Le Fevre and John Paul Jones entered Bonham's room to check on him again. He didn't stir, and after someone checked his pulse John Bonham was found to be dead, a victim of asphyxiation through inhaling vomit. The verdict later recorded at the inquest was accidental death. He was just 32 years old.

IT WAS a tragedy that Led Zeppelin would not survive. On 4 December the group made the logical official announcement that they "could not continue as we were."

It's worth noting that the very week they called it quits, AC/DC's 'Back In Black' and Queen's 'The Game' were both riding high in the US *Billboard* 200, while back in the UK Motörhead's 'Ace Of Spades' and Saxon's 'Strong Arm Of The Law' were climbing the charts.

Life for rock and metal fans would move on without Led Zeppelin. The Zep patches would soon be coming off jean jackets to be replaced by the logos of new and emerging heroes. Iron Maiden and Def Leppard were ready to break through, and the 1980s would also see the likes of U2 and Bruce Springsteen performing in mega-stadiums, continuing the precedent set by Led Zeppelin.

It's hard to believe now, but Zep's standing in the early '80s was lukewarm at best. They were fast becoming forgotten giants. However a chaotic 1985 Live Aid reunion with both Phil Collins and The Power Station's Tony Thompson playing drums nevertheless put them back in the spotlight. With bands such as The Cult and The Mission citing them as influences, and Page remastering their catalogue for the 1990 box set and 'Remasters' releases, Zep's status as the greatest rock band of all time was firmly restored – and it's been that way ever since.

THE BAND continues to cast a huge shadow over the contemporary rock landscape. As Richard Cole observes: "They were the last of the giants and they still loom ever large. In fact, even now they seem bigger than anyone else. Zeppelin blazed a trail that so many have followed."

In 2003 the official *Led Zeppelin* DVD, compiled by Dick Carruthers and Jimmy Page, included seven-songs from the Knebworth shows, featuring performances of 'Rock And Roll', 'Nobody's Fault But Mine', 'Sick Again', 'Achilles Last Stand', 'In The Evening', 'Kashmir', and 'Whole Lotta Love'. At the time of its release Page said, "The reality of Knebworth was that it was fantastic. We had to come in by helicopter and you could just see this huge sea of people. And it was astonishing."

Plant added, "If you watch and listen to 'Achilles Last Stand' at Knebworth it's still absolutely spectacular."

Ultimately those two massive gatherings at Knebworth in August 1979 would become Led Zeppelin's last UK hurrah with John Bonham – and maybe it was meant to be that way. There would be no fading away or falling record sales. Zep went out with a bang in front of their biggest ever UK audiences – and with their legacy entirely intact.

A final Jimmy Page reflection: "We were confident. It was always the same ethic really. If we were doing a show we were determined to knock everybody out."

For many fans who made that pilgrimage to a field near Stevenage, Knebworth was their first and last opportunity to see what all the fuss was about. Zeppelin at Knebworth '79 was an unforgettable event. The fact that we're still talking about it over 40 years later only confirms that...

"KNEBWORTH WAS NEVER A GRAND FAREWELL"

Tour manager Richard Cole on the original Zep line-up's last ever UK shows

WITH ZEPPELIN NOT HAVING TOURED FOR TWO YEARS, WHAT WAS YOUR REACTION TO PETER GRANT'S DECISION TO STAGE THE BAND'S COMEBACK AT KNEBWORTH?

"I was very pleased that we were back working. Peter Grant would discuss things with the band and then he'd tell me about the plans. Then it was up to me to work it all out logistically. I remember going to discuss Knebworth with [promoter] Freddy Bannister at his home in Knightsbridge. Then I went to Knebworth House and met the Cobbold family, who owned the place. The first thing we did was look around the park to see where it would be best to build the stage. I then liaised with Ian Knight, who did the lighting production, and with Showco, our PA company in Dallas."

WHAT LOGISTICAL ISSUES DID YOU FACE PUTTING TOGETHER THE BAND'S LARGEST EVER UK SHOWS?

"My job was to make sure everything fell into place and to do that there was a lot of stuff to prepare. But we didn't have too many issues. We'd already had a lot of experience running big shows with massive audiences on the last Zeppelin US tour. What's interesting is that I was talking to Metallica's tour manager once, and he told me that their crew stretches to over 100 people. We did Knebworth with something like 30 people. The Showco PA came over and it was a fairly smooth set-up. Morale was very high and rehearsals were great. We built the stage at Bray Studios and it was one of the biggest stages the band had ever performed on. At the soundcheck on the Thursday, Robert and Bonzo went out front to hear what the sound was like, and Jason took over on drums for a number. We tested all the gear and then did two warm-up shows in Copenhagen."

TELL ME ABOUT YOUR MEMORIES OF THE KNEBWORTH SHOWS?

"I knew the band was on form and the audience reaction was incredible. You have to remember, though, that I was running backwards and forwards all the time. I didn't get to see a show all the way through or to stand at the side of the stage for long. There was always other stuff to take care of. For example, at the second Knebworth show it was down to me to pay Keith Richards and Ronnie Wood for their set. I paid in cash from the day's takings! When I attended the Zeppelin O2 reunion show for Ahmet Ertegun in 2007 it occurred to me that it was the first time I'd ever sat and watched an entire Zep show."

DID YOU THINK ZEP HAD A FUTURE IN THE 1980S?

"I did. Knebworth was never planned as some sort of grand farewell. Looking back, there were plenty of countries the band missed out, places like Brazil. The problem was that a few countries were still pretty dangerous back then, and safety was always a big priority for Peter Grant. When they decided to scale it all down, though, I was in favour. Getting into competition with other bands – 'Oh, the Stones have got more lights than we do, so we need to get more than them' – was stupid. We decided to make things more manageable."

YOU STARTED ROAD MANAGING THE FIRST ZEPPELIN US TOUR IN 1968 AND STAYED WITH THE BAND ALL THE WAY THROUGH TO KNEBWORTH. THAT MUST HAVE BEEN SOME RIDE...

"It really was. In 1969 and 1970 bands like Blood, Sweat & Tears were going out for something like $15,000 a night. We were getting good money from the second US tour onwards and then we began overtaking everyone. Playing Madison Square Garden in New York City for the first time was a real thrill. But then we went from doing a single night there to three nights, and then to six. That was unheard of.

"Everything really changed when the band opened the 1973 US tour in Atlanta playing to 49,000 people, then 56,000 in Tampa the next night, which beat the attendance record The Beatles had set at Shea Stadium back in 1965. That was when Peter told me to hire a private jet, and that led to The Starship.

"The thing is, the band trusted us – the management and the road crew – and we trusted the band. You're only going to get that if you're there at the beginning. As you get bigger the roles get bigger and trust becomes more important. On that first US tour I was driving the band from gig to gig in a hired Lincoln Convertible. Then within four years we were all on board the Starship. To have been a part of that is unforgettable. It really was an amazing time.

"Nowadays bands bring in a tour manager for a certain tour and then get another one for the next tour. We always worked as a team and the camaraderie between us was very special. It was still there at Knebworth."

Photos: Getty Images/FG/Bauer-Griffin; Getty Images/Victor Blackman/Daily Express/Hulton Archive

MAPLE LEAF MAX-HEM!

Kim Mitchell is a Canadian icon, first as a musician, but also as a DJ. His recorded work with **Max Webster** and as a solo artist spans 45 years and includes many, many inspiring songs. *Paul Suter* tracks down the guitarist and vocalist for a fascinating insight into the man, his work and his life...

IN 2020 IT WAS announced that Kim Mitchell was to be inducted into the Canadian Songwriters Hall Of Fame, joining a fairly short list of rockers (basically Rush, Eddie Schwartz, Randy Bachman, and Burton Cummings of The Guess Who) standing alongside more mainstream Canadian icons like Neil Young, Robbie Robertson, Joni Mitchell, and Leonard Cohen. It's a striking endorsement of Kim's work with Max Webster and his subsequent solo career, as are the three Junos (Canadian Grammys) that he has to his name.

The Kim Mitchell story begins back in 1963, not in the throbbing metropolis of Toronto, but three hours away in Sarnia. That's where 11-year-old Kim joined his first band The Gladiators and won his first award at a TV talent show in Detroit, over the border in the US but only an hour away. Further teenage bands would follow: The Quotations, whose repertoire consisted mostly of Motown covers; The Grass Company, which introduced some original material and got as far as releasing a single in 1968; Big Al's Band; and finally Zooom, which is where Kim's career really kicked off.

"I was 17 years old, and we were actually playing some original material because the band had a songwriter, Jim Chevalier, who was the first influence on who I became. So I'm still in school and they say they're moving to Toronto and do I want to come? Sure!

"They'd rented a house for $150 a month and we rehearsed in the dining room. We lasted through the winter, despite the fact that our fridge didn't work. It was outside the back door eternally waiting for the landlord to replace it. That never happened, so when it came to spring the band had to break up because we couldn't keep our food cold. True story."

> "I WAS A FAN OF PEOPLE WHO DID SOMETHING *DIFFERENT* LIKE ZAPPA AND CAPTAIN BEEFHEART. I DIDN'T WANT TO STICK TO THE FORMAT OF WHAT I WAS HEARING ON THE RADIO. A CHORUS? A BRIDGE? WHAT'S A *PRE*-CHORUS?"

The rest of the group moved back to Sarnia, but Kim wasn't about to give up. He was fortunate enough to hook up with a young Jack Richardson, yet to make his name as a record producer but already doing steady work on commercials. Sessions for Richardson and the occasional $100 from Kim's dad were enough to keep the wolf from the door – but only just! In the end Mitchell did return to Sarnia and spent a year playing country music with Dick Dixon And The Stone Mountain Band.

If that wasn't off-brand enough, Kim's next move was into a lounge act called Alex And The Family Heirloom, which saw him earning the heady sum of $150 a week, wearing suits and riffing through the works of Tom Jones, the Welsh singer who was idolised by the band's frontman. 'Alex' was of Greek heritage and took the band to the island of Rhodes for a long-term residency at his parents' restaurant, a suitably surprising place for the Max Webster story to begin.

AN OLD friend from Sarnia, Paul Woods, happened to be working his way around Europe and got in touch with Kim, who invited him to visit. We now know Paul better as lyricist Pye Dubois.

"Back home he always liked to hang around with bands, he'd help carry the gear, and we became friends. At that point I'd never written a song and I was still trying to find my path as a guitar player. Pye was only on Rhodes for about three days, but we wrote our first song together. Pye was an imagist, there weren't many *stories*. He drew pictures with words and I just loved that about him. I'd always edit his stuff, take a line from here, a line from there, and so on. He never had a book, he would literally write on anything. A matchbook cover,

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a tissue. Anything."

The seeds of Max Webster were sown, although putting a band together wasn't the reason Kim terminated his idyll in the sun to return to Toronto. It was his focus on developing his skills as a guitar player, and the opportunity to study under jazz maestro Tony Braden.

"I needed income to pay for the lessons, though, and that meant forming a band. The live scene was pretty healthy, so there were plenty of places to play. Jim Bruton, the keyboard player from The Family Heirloom, knew a bassist, Mike Tilka, who was moving to Toronto, and he was the first recruit. I wanted a band name that was a *name*; Mike had been in a band called Family At Mac's, who had a song called 'Song For Webster' and there it was – Max Webster."

Max Webster photographed in 1977. L-R: Mike Tilka (bass), Kim Mitchell (vocals and guitar), Gary McCracken (drums), Terry Watkinson (bass)

Bruton himself joined the band in early '73, completed by drummer/lead vocalist Phil Trudell, and Max's first few forays were sets of covers. But the writing with Pye was continuing and the band started to take on a different vibe. Trudell had health problems and quit, replaced by Paul Kersey from an R&B outfit The Bluesmen Revue with a 1968 single to their name. Kim took on the vocals when nobody else in the band proved capable of carrying a tune. Jim Bruton followed Trudell out of the band. His successor was Terry Watkinson, formerly of The Yeomen, who'd had a hit single with 'Take The First Train Home', but at the time was studying architecture at the University Of Toronto. The line-up was complete, and the music was becoming characteristically Max.

"We were doing covers of course, but they were mostly things like Jethro Tull and Zappa – I remember doing Zappa's 'Peaches En Regalia' – and then there were the songs I was writing with Pye. I was taking serious guitar lessons, so I was tending to challenge myself, go places I'd never been before, and I was a fan of people who did something *different* like Zappa and Captain Beefheart.

"I didn't want to stick to the format of what I was hearing on the radio. Plus neither Pye nor I knew the first thing about song structure. A chorus? A bridge? What's a *pre*-chorus? I didn't learn that stuff till later when [Triumph guitarist and singer] Rik Emmett sat me down one day. He thought my stuff was really weird, asked if I knew anything about the parts of a song. 'What are you talking about?' So he spelled it all out for me, and that was my biggest lesson in songwriting. I'd just been thinking, 'OK, I've got this bit and it kinda flows into that bit...' They're not rules so much as markers of what you're doing and where you are. Although at least for me sometimes it's right to ignore them, and in the end I think that's one of the things people liked about Max, being more experimental and free, not so structured."

THE BAND was working consistently, three sets a night at club residencies Monday to Thursday, high schools and the like on Fridays and Saturdays. They quickly built a following with their unconventional tunes and wacky stage gear. There was nobody anything like Max on the scene.

"Places were filling up for us, and as much as the bar owners were going, 'Play some sh*t they can dance to,' we were packing their bars so they kinda let it go."

The industry was starting to take notice. It wasn't long before Rush manager Ray Danniels stepped in and signed the band, beginning a relationship that was to both bless and haunt Max Webster over the following years.

Within a year of signing that management deal Max had recorded their first album, 1976's 'Max Webster', with producer Terry Brown, who was already working with Rush. The whole process lasted just two weeks, starting in the studio around midnight and running to 6am.

"Even Rush were doing that. Daytime the studios were full of 'clients' – car and beer commercials paying top dollar. I would have liked a lot more time, but over the years I've realised that the album has a real charm. Fans made me aware of it and now I see it, I hear how cool and vibey it is."

The debut more than did its job as a calling card – every Max studio album has gone at least gold in Canada – and, riding high, the band promptly returned to the studio for 1977's 'High Class In Borrowed Shoes' with Terry Brown again producing. The outcome marked a progression from the debut and Kim is still proud of the album.

"It was definitely more commercial, and that was at least partly down to Terry Watkinson, who leaned much more in that direction than the rest of us. We had quite a lot of material and he was going, 'This one yes, that one no, this one yes...' And they were all our songs, so we were fine with it.

"We were constantly playing live or rehearsing and we'd matured as a band, plus we got more time in the studio – in the middle of the night again. Our drummer was gone [Paul Kersey went on to form The Hunt] and we brought in Gary McCracken, a friend from Sarnia. Things went well, every morning I was going home with a smile

on my face, and I'm pleased with that album to this day. Decades later I still play the title track with my solo band.

"The only thing I hate about the record is the sleeve and what I was wearing. To this day I'm like 'what the f*ck was I thinking?' But I guess it fitted the vibe of what we were doing. Looking back I really was a fashion disaster, it's completely embarrassing. But it served its purpose."

For those readers who aren't familiar with the sleeve, Mitchell appears on it resplendent in multi-coloured crop top, purple shorts, psychedelic tights and brown platforms shoes. Definitely a strong look.

THE MAX debut had been released on Taurus Records, which manager Danniels had started as a vehicle for his two non-Rush bands, Max Webster and Beatles tribute band Liverpool, who were then on the point of going all-original and renaming themselves Aerial. 'High Class...', however, would emerge on Anthem Records after Taurus was turned into a production company and signed the album over to Anthem, a company whose directors were Danniels and his fellow Rush manager Vic Wilson, along with the members of Rush. As time went by it became clear that anything on Anthem not by Rush would only get the necessary attention when Rush was inactive – a factor which would ultimately, it seems, play its part in the demise of Max.

Conversely, Rush was a useful carrot for Danniels to dangle when working on Max, and he was able to include Max Webster in the deal when he secured a US label, Mercury, for his prime act. In the long run just how valuable being on the same label was for Max Webster is open to question. But at least it meant that Max could be brought along to open on Rush's US dates. While there were accessible tunes on 'High Class...', airplay was scant. If Rush was a hard sell for Mercury at radio, Max was even harder, despite relatively commercial tunes like 'Diamonds Diamonds' and 'Rain Child'. And Rush was the priority.

Kim does recall one show – which may have been Danniels showcasing Max to booking agents to get them their own US tour – that bizarrely saw the band opening for Blondie at the Whisky A Go Go club in Los Angeles.

"Nothing came of it that I'm aware of, but we did really well. Still, the only real memory is being overwhelmed by the whole backstage scene around Debbie Harry. It was so Hollywood and totally packed. Just how many people can we cram into this room?"

It might also have been a backdoor showcase for a new record deal. Both Rush and Max had one more album to deliver to Mercury, and Danniels may well have been dangling the Rush carrot to get Max signed up to a new deal. What is certain, though, is that the ensuing 'Mutiny Up My Sleeve' album in 1978 was the band's first in the US on Capitol, and not their second on Mercury.

Making the album was not a smooth process. The band had trouble with the sounds they were getting in a new Toronto studio called Sounds Interchange. It was a problem they shared with Black Sabbath, who were trying to record 'Never Say Die!' at the same facility. Producer Terry Brown quit in frustration and the band fired bassist Mike Tilka in favour of Dave Myles, who'd played with Kim in The Grass Company years before. Bizarrely, Ray Danniels gave Tilka a job managing the band on his behalf, as well as entrusting him with the production abandoned by Terry Brown.

"I still like 'Mutiny...'," says Mitchell. "I really like the songs. I just don't like the way it's mixed. Mike took away all the bottom end. You'd think a bass player would want lots of bottom end, but his whole thing was that the less bottom end there is, the louder it sounds on the radio."

And there was the rub. Max Webster was all about being Max Webster, but that wasn't enough for management and label, who wanted more commercial success. Kim was pleased to be doing OK and making music he was happy with, but the continual nagging from on high about hit singles was starting to wear him down.

"I assumed Mike would have been bitter about getting kicked out of the band and now he was managing us. The whole vibe at Anthem got very weird for me. Musicians are there to bring happiness to people. Most of us aren't businessmen."

> "IT WAS SO COOL JUST BEING IN THE STUDIO WITH RUSH AND WITH BOTH BANDS PLAYING LIVE. IT WAS THUNDEROUS, LIKE A JET TAKING OFF. THE FIRST TAKE OF 'BATTLE SCAR' HAD THE MAGIC, THAT TOUCH OF SPONTANEITY WHERE IT'S NEARLY FALLING OFF THE EDGE."

IN 1979 Max's sales would peak with 'A Million Vacations', the band's first album to go platinum in Canada. This time Mike Tilka wasn't involved in the recording. Instead the band recruited John de Nottbeck, an old producer friend from Sarnia whose only other rock credit was for the band Zwol.

"A producer needs to get what the label needs, but also what the band is good at, and John *was* good at getting the best out of the band. And he was also good at going, 'That's good, but let's try this.' In the end I guess 'A Million Vacations' was a more 'commercial' sounding record. I love that album, and 'Paradise Skies' and 'Let Go The Line' were our two biggest tunes. I still hear 'Paradise Skies' on the radio all the time."

That same year of 1979 also brought a live album, 'Live Magnetic Air', plus the band's first visit to Europe. Opening for Rush, of course, with the delightful little wrinkle that Capitol paid tour support for Max to Rush, effectively pulling money out of Max's pocket and putting it into Rush's. Capitol Europe also released their own special version of the album, 'Magnetic Air', combining one side of live tracks with a second side of numbers from the first two albums, all of which had never seen the light of day on that side of the Atlantic.

The upside of platinum success was fairly immediate. "You develop more confidence, faith in

Photo: Getty Images/Fin Costello

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what you're doing. We were really thankful that we were getting to do this."

But with success comes pressure from above for more success. Thankful musicians just don't cut it. And the reality was that the lengthy touring schedule that went with success would bring a lot of dissatisfaction to the surface by the time the follow-up album, 1980's 'Universal Juveniles', was cut. Terry Watkinson had quit the band, with Dave Stone from Ritchie Blackmore's Rainbow stepping in for the recording, and Kim was wilting under the pressure.

"There was so much chatter about the business side of things, and I didn't know how to quiet it. There was so much 'We need airplay. You have to do this over there and that over here. We're making the investment in you. You gotta do it.' It was like we were working for them, when it should really have been the other way around."

Kim Mitchell and Mike Tilka live on stage in San Bernardino, California, 26 September 1977

A SAVING grace was that old friend Jack Richardson was now a name producer and there were no arguments about recruiting him to produce 'Universal Juveniles.'

"I was disillusioned and my confidence was shaken, I struggled through the writing (the album finds both Dave Myles and Gary McCracken writing with Pye Dubois to supplement Kim's contributions), and I thought recording was going to be really hard. But right away Jack kicked ass and made it happen."

And one of the things that happened was the legendary song 'Battle Scar' featuring not only Max, but also Rush.

"I've had to correct so many people since. 'Man, I really love that song you did with Rush.' No, Rush did a song with *us*! It was already written and we'd been playing it on the road – and every night Rush would come out to the side of the stage and stand there watching that song. So one day we're hanging out in their dressing room – the headliners got hot food and we didn't, and they were happy to share – and they told us that if we were going to record it they wanted in.

"Man, it was so cool just being in the studio with both bands playing live. It was thunderous, like a jet taking off. We played it through once to get the levels, and what you hear is the first take. We were having so much fun there were actually 13 takes. We used up every reel of tape in the studio, but we had to agree with Jack that the first take had the magic, that touch of spontaneity where it's nearly falling off the edge."

As it happens this wasn't the first time that Rush drummer Neil Peart had played with Max Webster.

"Not many people know, but Neil used to warm up for live shows by playing along with us. He asked if it was cool and we were totally fine with it. Nobody could see him and the mics were off so nobody could hear him but us. The audience didn't have a clue. He even learned all of Gary's drum fills so he could play along without it sounding like a train wreck. Pretty cool, huh?"

By 1978 the band had put some thought into their image

BASSIST DAVE Myles had quit the band after the recording of 'Universal Juveniles', replaced by Mike Gingrich, who would later replace Gary LaLonde in Toronto. Terry Watkinson's place, meanwhile, had now been taken up by Greg Chadd – at least until Watkinson was persuaded to return, leading to a bizarre situation where the band played two shows in one day in Barrie, Ontario with Chadd performing at the first show and Watkinson at the second. By now the Max Webster line up had also been augmented with a second guitarist, Steve McMurray from Wireless.

The album was actually doing well as Max stepped out on the road for headline dates and a brief, four-show visit to Britain at the start of 1981, before hooking up with Rush again. 'Universal Juveniles' turned gold and was heading towards platinum, but time was up for Kim, he just couldn't do it any more.

"Four months in we got to Memphis and I was just 'I gotta go home, I can't do this any more.' I was creatively burned out, writing for the album had been a struggle and I had no idea what I was going to write next. And in all honesty I was tired of being Rush's little brother. They were always great and I truly appreciate everything they did for us. But they were label and management's big boys, the big money, and we were maybe paying for the office staff. I knew we wouldn't be missed."

Kim's post mortem on Max Webster remains entirely positive though, thanks to the unique identity the band established and the lack of compromise that characterised their entire run.

"It's the thing I was most proud of. When we started the band we wanted to have our own little piece of musical real estate, and I think we established that. To this day musicians tell me how much they loved Max Webster. I did a gig with Neal Schon once and I'm freaking out because I'm sitting in the same room as such a great guitar player – and he comes over to me and tells me how much he loved my work with Max Webster! Or there was Paul Gilbert telling me how one of my solos on 'Universal Juveniles' melted his face off!"

"I REALLY wasn't planning on a solo career," Mitchell confesses. "When I quit Max in April of 1981 I was just going to join another band. There were a bunch of great Canadian bands and I'd have been happy playing for any one of them, even rhythm guitar, so I put the word out that I was available. And nobody called!

"And then came my big mistake. After a year I'd written 17 tunes, and I took them into the label. I should have just lied and said I'd got nothing. So an EP [of five tracks, titled 'Kim Mitchell'] happened that was with the same management and label."

That aside, Mitchell was more than ready to step away from everything that was Max, recruiting a new band by snagging drummer Paul DeLong and bassist Robert Sinclair Wilson from Domenic Troiano's band and going on to make some hugely successful records.

"I really enjoyed the first EP. It was an angry, p*ssed-off record. I had a great time making it, and it was nice to be in an era when you could still do an EP. To me it was a brand new thing, not just the Max guy going solo. I was trying to break away from all that, and I certainly wasn't going to write another 'Toronto Tontos' or 'Beyond The Moon."

An interesting aside is that 'Kids In Action' from the EP was actually recorded by Dave Lee Roth for his debut album.

"I got a call from Billy Sheehan. They were in the studio with Ted Templeman and needed the lyrics for the second verse, because they were already tracking it. Drop the phone! But it got bumped by 'Tobacco Road' at the last minute. My almost-famous moment..."

The ensuing Kim Mitchell LP, 1984's 'Akimbo Alogo', saw the musician no longer recording for Anthem. The album appeared in Canada on the Alert label, which was run by a one-time Anthem exec who'd helped to extricate Kim from his deal there. Things were certainly headed in the right direction when it went platinum and outsold every album he'd ever made with Max. After having worked again with Jack Richardson on the EP, the album saw Kim take on the production duties (alongside Nick Blagona). That has largely been the case ever since, albeit frequently with co-production credits for his engineers.

Keyboard player Todd Booth was added to the band, along with rhythm guitarist Peter Fredette, who's been with Kim ever since, though now as a bassist.

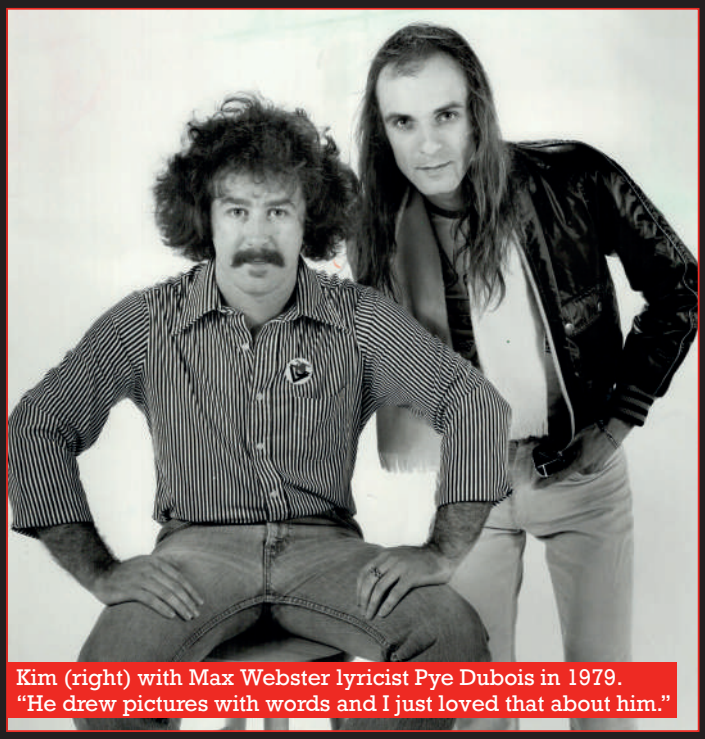
"Every night I look over and he's still there. He's lasted longer than both of my marriages combined!"

'Akimbo Alogo' featured Kim's only significant US hit in 'Go For Soda', co-opted by the pressure group Mothers Against Drunk Drivers, who either managed to grab the wrong end of the stick in reading the lyrics – written by Pye Dubois – or cleverly decided to use them for another purpose. The song has nothing to do with staying off the sauce when behind the wheel, but is rather about a couple arguing and deciding to suspend hostilities by going for a soda together.

What came next turned out to be Mitchell's commercial peak, the 1986 triple-platinum 'Shakin' Like A Human Being.' The label was convinced that the songs were top class and invested in a month of recording at Morin Heights in Quebec, formerly Le Studio. At the time it was one of the world's premier studios, and Kim co-produced the album with resident engineer Paul Northfield.

"'Patio Lanterns' is my biggest song – and I wanted it off the record. We had 12 songs and only room for 10. Two had to go and I was sure that had to be one of them. It had taken forever to record, three days to get a usable vocal, mixing was frustrating, and I *hated* the snare sound. So much about that song bugged me, I didn't care if I never heard it again. So much for that..."

The album didn't make much noise outside Canada, where distributors rarely put a lot of effort into indie label releases. But in Canada it was mega-successful and put Kim into arenas for a lengthy touring schedule, which meant a three year gap between 'Shakin'...' and its successor. The touring line-up included a 17-year-old keyboard player named Greg Wells, who'd talked his way into the band before eventually moving on to become a Grammy-winning producer, with credits including Taylor Swift, Keith Urban, and Katy Perry.



Kim (right) with Max Webster lyricist Pye Dubois in 1979. "He drew pictures with words and I just loved that about him."

"WHEN WE STARTED THE BAND WE WANTED TO HAVE OUR OWN LITTLE PIECE OF MUSICAL REAL ESTATE, AND I THINK WE ESTABLISHED THAT. I DID A GIG WITH NEAL SCHON ONCE – AND HE COMES OVER TO ME AND TELLS ME HOW MUCH HE LOVED MY WORK WITH MAX WEBSTER!"

NEXT ALBUM in line was 'Rockland.' The year was now 1989 and the music scene was changing, but the label still believed US success was possible and came up with a shortlist of name US producers whose weight might make a difference south of the border.

"So I'm watching TV with my wife when she answers the phone. 'It's for you.' 'Who is it?' 'It's a guy called Joe. I can't tell what he's saying.' I figured a fan had gotten hold of my number. 'Joe who?' 'Maybe Walsh?'

"Holy f*ck! I was a huge fan of Joe, and really loved [his first album after leaving James Gang, 1972's] 'Barnstorm'. And then the penny dropped. The label had mentioned reaching out to him to produce the record. And the entire conversation was 'Jim, [*sic*], you wanna make a record?' 'Sure.' 'Alright, let's make a record.' And he hung up.

"Next thing I'm on a plane to Memphis. We were playing the demos in the studio and Joe's coming

Photos: Getty Images/Fin Costello; Getty Images/Dick Loek/Toronto Star

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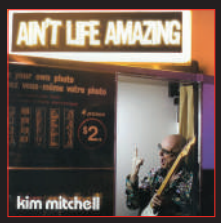
up with all these great ideas. But then he'd leave for 40 minutes, come back for another track and then leave again. It turned out he was having girl problems and she was there in the building. So I suggested maybe we should try again at another time when he wasn't so distracted... and I never heard from him again. About a decade later we played with him and he admitted he didn't remember our meeting at all. Or much else from those years."

In the end Kim produced the album alongside Pat Mastelotto and engineer Paul DeVilliers. The latter was responsible for hit albums with Mr. Mister and Yes, as well as being the latter's live soundman. In theory his name should have grabbed the interest of US radio programmers, but changing times meant DeVilliers failed to make an impact and again Kim failed to make any headway in the States. Once more, though, the album did really well in Canada. Times were changing there too, but not enough to stop 'Rockland' hitting double platinum.



WITH TWO consecutive multi-platinum albums the next move was almost inevitably a live album. 'I Am A Wild Party', mixed by Mike Fraser of Bryan Adams and Aerosmith fame, proved to be another platinum success in Canada. The title might sound a bit Max-ish, but apparently not.

"More like a Dubois lyric. I loved his lyrics for 'The Party' and then he did it again. '*I'm a whole lot of feathers and not much chicken...*'

"Compared with how some people always cheat on live albums, I'm not ashamed to admit that the title track was actually recorded in a rehearsal room before the show with Matt Frenette from Loverboy on drums. [Frenette was there because Gary McCracken simply couldn't make it that particular day.] It was live alright, just no audience. We borrowed some crowd noise and that was it."

Next up was 'Aural Fixations', and by 1992 anyone successful in the '70s or '80s was pretty much unwelcome, which meant the album was only able to battle its way to gold.

"Isn't it always funny to hear artists loving their records that did terribly? It's one of my favourites. It did nothing, to the point that it just got tossed in the garbage by the label. If you don't already have it, good luck finding one. But there's one good memory. In my neighbourhood there was a kid with a beautiful black Trans Am. He'd roar through the streets with his windows down – and he was always blasting that album."

'Aural Fixations' was produced by Kim alongside John Webster, formerly keyboard player for Idle Eyes and Rock & Hyde. It also marked the beginning of Kim's longstanding relationship with ZZ Top producer Joe Hardy (who mixed the record) and saw Streetheart's Spider Sinnaeve step in on bass. For the first time, though, the album didn't feature lyrics by Pye Dubois.

"We had a falling out," explains Kim. "I'm not entirely sure why, but it was a problem that he didn't drive and he was always calling me to take him to the shows. Man, why am I your chauffeur? Sometimes going to a show you want to be on your own and put on your game face, and the fact was that it was also a rough time for me. My marriage had just broken up. So I called Jim Chevalier. I remember loving his work when were in The Quotations so long ago. He was a very creative guy."

TWO YEARS later the rift with Pye Dubois had been repaired and Kim was in a much better frame of mind. He succeeded in making one of his favourite albums, 'Itch.' It was 1994 by now, so no surprise that it didn't go gold, but there are no regrets.

"It was another of those times in your life where you're listening to the playback and it sounds so *right*, and I was proud of the songs on that record. 'Wonder Where And Why' had some of my favourite Pye lyrics, 'The U.S. Of Ache', 'Human Condition'...

"I was so happy with what he was coming up with, but then in 1995 we had a Max Webster reunion and it all came apart. Gary McCracken had been getting annoyed with him. 'He's always in the dressing room getting heavy about what we should have done back then. I'm just here to have a good time. Either talk to him or leave him at home.' So being me I avoided conflict by not returning Pye's call about giving him a ride to the next show. And the next thing you know I get a letter from a lawyer saying, 'Mr. Dubois wishes no further contact with Mr. Mitchell' – and I haven't heard from him since. I wish him well. Ha ha, he wrote 'Tom Sawyer' with Rush. He's probably got more money than I do..."

About that Max reunion... Given the declining solo sales and the place Max has in Canadian hearts, you have to wonder if a permanent reunion was on the cards, with Kim's semi-permanent sidekick Peter Fredette having replaced Mike Tilka on bass.

"I was certainly entertaining the possibility, but it was the candle you buy that burns out really quickly. Some gigs had been lined up just for fun. Nobody was talking out loud about doing another record, but I'm sure that we were all thinking about it. But in the end the fact was that my solo career and the guys I was playing with were much more inspiring to me, and going back was... well, going back."

IT WAS 1999 before Kim released another album, with Andy Curran of Coney Hatch taking Pye Dubois's place.

"I'd produced their debut album [in 1982], and I've always liked Andy's lyrics."

By this time Kim was a divorced single dad bringing up two sons, which meant that his priorities lay elsewhere. But the label wanted an album, so he put one together called 'Kimosabe'.

"Probably my least favourite record, my head wasn't

wrapped around it at all. And when it was done there weren't a lot of gigs, and the label lost interest."

Thereafter things went quiet for a while, but doing nothing got rather old and in 2004 Kim had the notion of calling Toronto's legendary Q107, by then a classic rock station that played his records daily.

"I was bored and I felt like doing something different, maybe a couple of hours on a Sunday night. They thought it was a great idea, but didn't have a slot for me, and then their afternoon drive guy quit. After mornings it's the second most prestigious spot on radio – and they offered it to me! 'Does this mean I have to work every day?' 'Yes, 2pm-7pm.' 'Erm, I'll get back to you.' And I did.

Kim on his first day working as a DJ at Q107 in Toronto, 9 August 2004

"FOR MY FIRST YEAR AS A DJ I SUCKED SO BAD. THE HATE EMAILS WERE OFF THE CHARTS AND ONE GUY EVEN SET UP *IHATEKIMMITCHELL.COM*. I HAD NO IDEA WHAT I WAS DOING."

"For the first year I sucked so bad. The hate emails were off the charts and one guy even set up *ihatekimmitchell.com*. I had no idea what I was doing. There were all these charts and sheets for running a show and I didn't have a clue what they meant. But my boss believed in me and I worked hard, really hard, took meetings every day to get on top of things. And then one day the morning guy at our main rival emailed me, told me that I was respecting the craft and was really starting to sound good. 'Keep at it, you've got this.'

"And that was the turning point for me. The show did really well for 11 years and I used to really enjoy my days at the station. I told the management that I was committed, I was a radio guy first and foremost and not a musician with a radio show. But would they at least not mind if I could voice-track the last couple of hours on a Friday if I had to leave early to catch a plane for a gig? They were fine with that."

IN 2007 Kim's radio gig coincided with his musical career when Max Webster reunited for a show as part of the station's 30th anniversary celebrations, the line-up this time including Mike Tilka, although Peter Fredette was also brought in to handle Geddy Lee's part on 'Battle Scar'. The show was recorded, but at present only one track has ever emerged, Terry Watkinson's 'Let Go The Line', which is included in the 2017 Max Webster box set 'The Party'.

The same year brought with it another Kim Mitchell album 'Ain't Life Amazing.' With no Pye Dubois any more, lyrics were contributed by one Craig Baxter.

"I found him in the chat section of my website. He was entertaining as hell, very creative. Radio wasn't playing me any more by then, but I love that record, I'm really proud of it. The sound was so good, it was really inspiring. One or two takes and that was it – the way it should be. It's one of the angriest sounding records of my career. If you want to know where my heart is, check this one out. I recorded a lot of the vocals in my apartment; my kids were teenagers by then and they're sticking their heads around the door going, 'Dad, are you alright?'"

Kim continued to play live over the ensuing years, a frequent guest at major festivals across Canada, but his radio career was his primary focus. Until it went away...

"Radio stations are always looking ahead. Not next year, but five- to seven-year projections, and I wasn't in the new one. Advertising revenue was down and they were cutting costs. The twist was that they wanted it to look like I wanted to leave. 'No, you're letting me go, which is OK. But let's not candy-coat this.' And in the end they were very good, treated me fairly, and I have nothing bad to say about them.

"I had a pity party for about a month – I'd never had a *job* before and now I'd been fired! And then I woke up one day and thought, 'Well, I guess I'm a rock guitar player again,' and that's always been OK. I love doing it, and I don't have to prepare a five-hour show five days a week. This is good."

And then things *weren't* good when Kim was suddenly hit with a heart attack in January 2016, which sidelined him for a year of rehab after emergency surgery to insert a stent in a blocked artery.

A GENTLE reintroduction to his life as a rocker followed when he was called in by his former label Anthem to compile the eight-disc Max Webster box set 'The Party'.

In the meantime Kim remains active, and late last year he unveiled a substantial surprise in the shape of a new album, 'The Big Fantasize.'

"I'll always be writing songs and playing guitar, but I really wasn't planning to record. And then Greg Wells was visiting friends up here – he lives in Los Angeles now – and wanted to come over and see how I was doing after the heart attack. We just went for a walk and talked about life, but as he was leaving I gave him a USB drive with some demos and asked him for some feedback if he could spare the time. He's a busy guy, but maybe he would have some insights on a track or two.

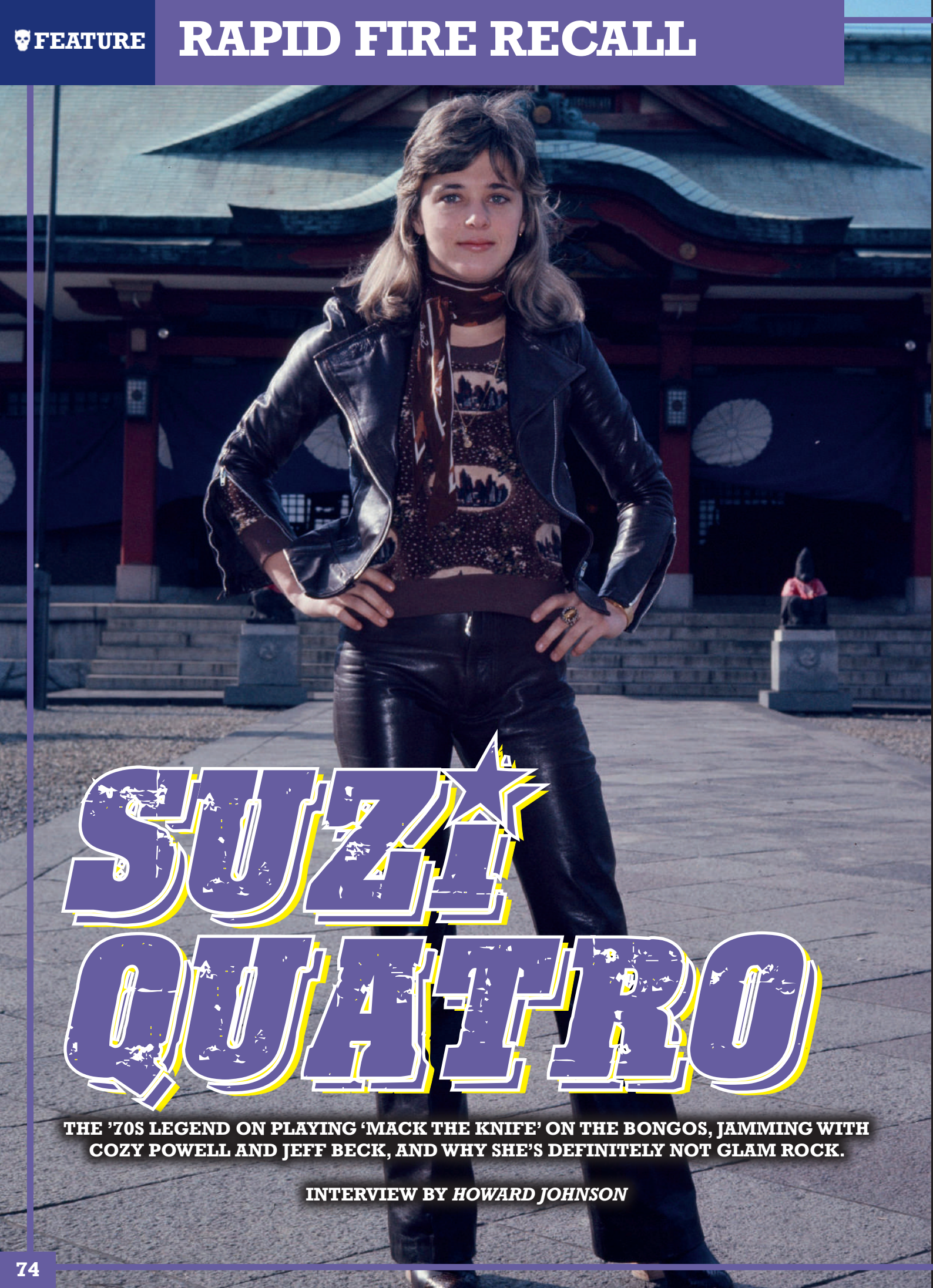
"And he called. 'I love all of these songs. Come to LA and record!' What? I can't afford Greg Wells! 'No man, let's just do it and work out the details later."

Released recently on El Mocambo Records, associated with the famous club and run by none other than Andy Curran, the resulting album reveals some new facets to the man we thought we knew by now.

"It's a very different record for me, and I'm really proud of it. It's not invading the room and knocking sh*t over. It's a more atmospheric record."

As a member of Canada's rock royalty Kim continues to be in demand as a live performer, and while trans-Canada treks aren't on the cards now, you can be sure we haven't heard the last of Kim Mitchell. So much the better...

Photo: Getty Images/Bernard Weil/Toronto Star



SUZI QUATRO

THE '70S LEGEND ON PLAYING 'MACK THE KNIFE' ON THE BONGOS, JAMMING WITH COZY POWELL AND JEFF BECK, AND WHY SHE'S DEFINITELY NOT GLAM ROCK.

INTERVIEW BY *HOWARD JOHNSON*

THE ART QUATRO TRIO

"My dad was a musician all his life. He earned his living working at General Motors in Detroit, but always played music as well. The Art Quatro Trio was his jazz band, and he was a charismatic performer surrounded by good players. I was only seven years old when I made my first appearance with the band. I was supposed to go to church one Sunday, but instead I went along with my dad to this early afternoon performance they'd been booked to do. I played bongos on 'Mack The Knife'! The weird thing is that I remember it like it was yesterday, and that one performance gave me my love of music for the rest of my life."

THE PLEASURE SEEKERS

"The Pleasure Seekers started in 1964 when I was 14, and it was my first band. Some of my sisters were in it too, which felt totally natural to me, because we'd done family shows for as long as I can remember; playing an instrument, singing a song, doing a sketch, telling a joke. I'd already been schooled in piano and percussion, but when we started the band everyone chose an instrument. I didn't speak up quickly enough, so ended up with the bass kind of by default. Because my dad was a musician we already had pretty much every instrument in the house. I told my dad we were starting a band and that I was going to play bass. I asked him if he had one I could use, so he gave me a 1957 Fender Precision with a Fender bass amp – as my very first instrument! When I tell other musicians that they all go green with envy. It's not surprising that I'm a good bass player given the instrument I had to learn on. Plus I already knew two other instruments, so the learning process was easier. It really was a lightbulb moment the minute I started playing the bass. It felt like a perfect fit. I was already percussion-oriented, so playing along to the drums felt very natural to me.

"The Pleasure Seekers was a show band. We did five shows a night, 45 minutes on, 15 minutes off, and that taught me a lot about entertainment. I was the frontperson and so I had to entertain the public, whether there was one person in the audience or a hundred people. I really learnt my craft in that band; how to pace myself, how to take care of my voice, things like that."

MICKIE MOST

"Mickie was a producer and record label owner in the UK, but he happened to be in Detroit in 1971 and came to see me play in a band called Cradle, which kind of developed out of The Pleasure Seekers. Mickie liked me and so I signed with him when I was 21 years old. He turned out to be a very important person in my life. He was like a dad to me and he allowed me to make my dreams come true. We were two typical Geminis, always talking nineteen to the dozen. We could talk until the cows came home! Mickie brought me to London to make an album in 1971. I was supposed to be there for three months and now here we are in 2021 – and I'm still in England! I still see Mickie's widow Chris for dinner, and weirdly I just felt Mickie's presence here. I was in the dining room just now and I honestly felt him there."

"I ALWAYS HAD A LOT OF BALLS AND WAS ALWAYS SURE OF MYSELF, SO I HAD NO QUALMS ABOUT COMING OVER TO ENGLAND. IT NEVER CROSSED MY MIND THAT SOMETHING COULD GO WRONG."

MOVING TO ENGLAND

"I was only 21, but it didn't faze me. I always had a lot of balls and I was always sure of myself, so I had no qualms about coming over. I missed all of my family, of course, but it never crossed my mind that something could go wrong. I think Mickie knew that I could handle it. He was a tough cookie himself, and he saw that we had a lot in common. Mickie always said, 'You don't *tell* Suzi what to do. You *suggest* what she *could* do.' I think he liked that. I could take care of myself."

CHINN AND CHAPMAN

"Nicky Chinn and Mike Chapman were the hot songwriting duo in England back in the early '70s. They were very good at coming up with singles and they came along at the right time for me. I'd been recording my own songs with Mickie, but he just couldn't get me on record the way we both knew I should sound. He'd be the first to admit that. So I'd been in England a year and nothing had really happened. But by 1972 I'd formed a band and we'd got the opening slot on a Slade tour. Mickie asked Chinn and Chapman to go see the band live to get a feel for what I was about, and then to try to write that elusive three minute hit single for me. So that's what they did, and they came up with 'Can The Can', which ended up going to number one in the UK in 1973. My relationship with Chinn and Chapman lasted many years. I wrote the albums and the B-sides, and they would provide most – though not all – of the singles. I'm still friends with Mike and I always will be. He acted as executive producer on my 2006 album 'Back To The Drive', and then produced my 2011 album 'In the Spotlight'. He's a really musical guy."

BEING A WOMAN IN ROCK

"I'm not a gender person. I was a tomboy as a little kid, and when I saw Elvis on TV and wanted to be him, it didn't enter my mind to think that he was a boy and I was a girl. I've never called myself a female musician. I'm just a musician. My attitude has always been, 'Hi. I'm Suzi, I play bass guitar, I sing rock'n'roll and I have a band. Do you have a problem with that?' I think I get a lot of respect for that. Mickie Most always told me I was unique, a one off. I didn't see a lot of people like me back then, and I still don't see a lot of people like me now. I see a lot of people who are *influenced* by me... So yes, I'm a one off, and thank goodness for that. Mind you, there was no guarantee that I was going to make it ►

Photos: Getty Images/Koh Hasebe/Shinko Music; Getty Images/Peter Bischoff

RAPID FIRE RECALL

being different from everyone else. But I wouldn't have changed even if I hadn't been successful. I would have been exactly the same person, just playing for free in a pub somewhere!"

'DANCE WITH THE DEVIL'

"I played on that Cozy Powell song and it was a big hit back in 1973. Cozy was always hanging around at Mickie Most's record company, RAK, and Mickie used to throw some sessions Cozy's way. Funnily enough, on that night when Mickie first saw me in Detroit with Cradle, he was actually with Cozy and Jeff Beck. They were all in town to do some recording at Motown. I ended up being invited to the studio and jammed with Cozy and Jeff on [funk instrumental] 'Cissy Strut'. Now who else can say that they've done that?! I miss Cozy. Back in 2016 I unveiled a blue plaque in his honour in his hometown of Cirencester, alongside Brian May and Tony Iommi."

"GLAM HAPPENED AT A PARTICULAR TIME AND IN A PARTICULAR WAY. THE MEN WERE ALL IN MAKE UP AND WEARING OUTLANDISH COSTUMES, BUT I WAS THERE WITH NO MAKE UP AT ALL AND WEARING A LEATHER CATSUIT."

GLAM ROCK

"I'm not glam rock, I've never been glam rock, and I get annoyed when people lump me in with glam rock. I'm a rock'n'roller and I have *always* been a rock'n'roller. Glam happened at a particular time and in a particular way. The men were all in make up and wearing outlandish costumes, but I was there with no make up at all and wearing a leather catsuit. Glam wasn't me at all, but it was a really fun period and I guess it helped me to make the breakthrough."

THE LEATHER CATSUIT

"I was a really big Elvis fan. I first saw him on TV at home in Detroit when I was five years old and straight away I realised that I wanted to be like him and do what he did. Then when I was 18 I saw the legendary 1968 comeback TV special where he wore all leather, and that definitely planted a seed in my mind. So when 'Can The Can' was about to come out Mickie said to me, 'We need to talk image. What do you want to wear?' I said. 'That's easy, I want to wear leather.' Well Mickie didn't like the idea at first, because he thought it was old fashioned. But I said, 'No, no, no. It'll be great.' Finally he said OK, so I won that one. Then he said 'What about a jumpsuit?', which I thought was a great idea. But I must admit, I was very naïve about things. I thought I'd jump around and everything would stay in place. And then when I actually wore it things didn't quite turn out that way. I thought, 'What *is* my mother gonna say?' But I think the whole thing worked because I wasn't *trying* to be sexy. I honestly didn't even know that I was."

LEATHER TUSCADERO

"I was in Japan some time around 1977 when I got a call from my US publicist. He told me about this TV show called *Happy Days*. The producers had seen my picture on the cover of *Rolling Stone* magazine and thought I'd be perfect for the part of a wild rocker girl called Leather Tuscadero. I didn't know the show, and I even had to fly out and audition on my own money. But my publicist said, 'Believe me, you're going to want to do this.' So I went to meet the show's producer in the States and turned up wearing leathers and jeans, my normal street clothes. The producer said, 'That was clever to dress for the part,' and I said, 'What are you talking about? This is what I wear!' Well he hired me in an instant. I'm still good friends with Ron Howard and Henry Winkler from that show. We email each other all the time."

ACTING

"When I was young and thinking of becoming an entertainer I could have gone any which way. I could have gone into comedy, I always knew I could act... But music pulled me in that direction. I do like acting very much, though. I did three seasons of *Happy Days* [from 1977-79] and I was offered a spin-off show for Leather Tuscadero, but I said no because I didn't want to be boxed in with a certain type of character. It was enough already that I was both Suzi Quatro *and* Leather Tuscadero. Ron Howard told me I should never take acting lessons because what I had was natural, and that acting classes would ruin that. That was a big compliment."

'STUMBLIN' IN'

"'Stumblin' In' was a Chinn and Chapman song that I did as a duet with Chris Norman from Smokie back in 1978. It was a million seller in the States, my biggest hit there. I remember that I was recording at the EMI studios in Cologne in Germany and got invited to an awards ceremony where there was a party afterwards. I ended up jamming with Chris and Mike Chapman liked the way the two of us sounded together. Mike came to the studio the next day and got the engineer to set up a tape. He sang the melody to 'Stumblin' In' and I played some piano along to it – and it sounded great. Mike said, 'That's a duet for you and Chris Norman. All I need to do now is finish it off.' When the tune was ready Chris and I recorded the vocals live, facing each other. That's what gave the song its intimacy. It was a real duet."

WORKING AS A BROADCASTER

"Ever since I first started getting interviewed on the radio people said I should be a DJ. Apparently I have a warm,

intimate radio voice. Eventually in the '90s a show came along that I wanted to do and I ended up doing 15 years at BBC Radio 2. I was even up for a Radio Presenter Of The Year award once, so I did pretty damn good. In the end I left Radio 2 because I'd noticed that the station wasn't playing my records, and I thought it had something to do with the fact that I was a DJ there. I was always an artist first, so I had to go. They're still not playing my records on Radio 2, though, but what can you do?"

NAKED UNDER LEATHER

"*Naked Under Leather* was a 2005 documentary about me that was never released. Vicki Blue from The Runaways was putting it together and she did four years of filming lots of good things. But one interviewee didn't like the rushes they were sent of their contribution and refused to sign the release forms. And then that person went and put a lot of stuff on the Internet that she'd promised we could use for the documentary. So Vicky had to scrap the whole thing, which was really disappointing at the time."

UNZIPPED

"I'd wanted to write my autobiography for a long time, but I finally felt the time was right to do it in 2007. I wrote the entire thing myself, with no ghostwriter involved. I can type like the wind and can even do shorthand, so every last comma, every last full stop in *Unzipped*, is mine. The story is really about two people, Little Susie from Detroit and then Suzi Quatro the rock'n'roller – and both people are important. It's a completely true and honest account of my life, and that was the hardest part of doing it. To write about things honestly, you have to go back and relive things that may be painful all over again. So when I was writing about divorce, for example, I'd find myself back there and crying all over again. But that's good, really, because it shows that it comes from the heart. You can't be third person about these things."

THE SUZI Q DOCUMENTARY

"A guy called Liam Firmager phoned me from Australia and told me that he'd like to put together a documentary about me. But he said that while he liked my music well enough, he wasn't what you'd call 'a fan'. That made me curious to know why he wanted to make the film at all, and he explained that he'd seen me on TV and was fascinated by me. That was what convinced me to do it. It was four years in the making, and came out in 2019. Right from the start of the *Suzi Q* project I said, 'If you want a documentary full of people saying how great I am, you're talking to the wrong girl. But if you want to do the real warts and all story then we're OK.' I said that I wouldn't edit anything out, even if certain things made me want to cringe. And what was interesting was that the most awkward moments became my favourite bits of the film, because those were the bits that showed that mine has not been an overnight journey, and that it's been tough."

THREE SUZI Q SONGS THAT SUM YOU UP

"There's a song called 'No Soul/No Control' that's on the 'No Control' album from 2019. When I play it live I always tell the audience to listen to the words, because those lyrics sum me up. Then I'll go for a song called 'My Heart And Soul' from my latest album 'The Devil In Me', because it shows off my softer side. And for a third song I'll choose 'The Wild One', the opening track from the 'Quatro' album from 1974. That number is just so me."

LATEST ALBUM 'THE DEVIL IN ME'

"My son Richard and I worked on it together and it really was a great experience. 2019 was a big year for me. The *Suzi Q* documentary came out and I played 85 sold-out shows. And 2020 *should* have been huge, because I had 95 shows booked. But then lockdown came and there were no gigs, so Richard and I got straight to working on the next album. Funnily enough, I've found this whole weird period inspiring as a songwriter. Maybe it's because it's been such an emotional time for everyone. Working on this album with my son was a fantastic experience, because Richard has really let me see Suzi Quatro through *his* eyes, and that's been exciting as hell!"

THE FUTURE

"My main hope is that I can start gigging again before too long. I've got a really special show planned for the Royal Albert Hall in London on 20 April 2022, but I'd love to be playing long before then. I don't need the money from gigs, but I really miss them because they give me somewhere to get rid of all my energy. I've still got the fire in my belly, I've still got a lot that I want to say and believe me, I'm definitely going to say it!"

Photos: Getty Images/Ian Dickson/Redferns; Getty Images/David Redfern/Redferns

UNCOVERED

Sammy Hagar (left) and Neal Schon. The beating heart of the HSAS supergroup

THE BAND THAT TIME FORGOT

HSAS was the supergroup project featuring **Sammy Hagar** and **Neal Schon** that somehow never went supernova. *Malcolm Dome* talks to Sammy to uncover the untold story of an idea that never quite caught on...

ON PAPER IT SEEMED like a band that could go on to dominate the mid-'80s. Livewire frontman Sammy Hagar, Journey master guitarist Neal Schon, in-demand bassist Kenny Aaronson, and former Santana drummer Michael Shrieve. Four huge talents, as *Kerrang!* magazine quickly recognised when granting HSAS the cover slot of issue 58, which appeared at the end of December 1983.

The notion of the rock supergroup had led to the formation of such acts as Bad Company, Blizzard Of Oz, and Asia in earlier years, and nobody was about to suggest that Hagar, Schon, Aaronson, Shrieve didn't deserve recognition in among such exalted company. Sadly, though, the collaboration didn't last. By the end of 1984 HSAS was no more, having played just eight shows and released one solitary album, 'Through the Fire', in March of 1984. The likelihood is that the band's underwhelming commercial impact – the album didn't chart in the US and a cover of the Procol Harum standard 'A Whiter Shade Of Pale' limped to number 94 on the US singles listings – played a major part in this short tenure. The band's label, Geffen, can't have been thrilled with that return on their investment...

Even today, when the passage of time often sees numerous reassessments of albums that somehow slipped through the net first time around, 'Through The Fire' has been largely ignored. And while the musical CVs of the four members are rightly revered, HSAS barely merits a mention on any of them. Yet that's exactly why *Rock Candy Mag*, which loves to walk the rock road less travelled, was delighted when Sammy Hagar agreed to shine a light on one of the less-illuminated corners of his impressive career. Maybe he can unlock the reasons why HSAS never got out of the traps...

> "NEAL SCHON'S OFTEN OVERLOOKED WHEN PEOPLE ARE DISCUSSING THE FINEST GUITARISTS IN THE HISTORY OF ROCK. BUT KNOWING HIM THE WAY I DO – AS A FRIEND AND AS A MUSICIAN – I UNDERSTAND HIS TRUE VALUE. AND HE PROVED IT ALL OVER 'THROUGH THE FIRE'."

SAMMY, TELL ME ABOUT THE ROOTS OF THE HSAS PROJECT

"Neal Schon and I had been friends for years and we were always jamming together. Whenever he was home in the Bay Area Neal liked nothing better than to call me up and arrange a jam session. He loved to cut loose from the musical discipline he worked under in Journey, and to express himself on the guitar in ways that could never work with that band. So I guess we were already used to being in each other's musical pockets. It felt logical to think about taking it a step further and we talked a lot about starting a new band together."

WHAT DO YOU THINK MAKES NEAL SO SPECIAL AS A MUSICIAN?

"The vibe he has when he plays. He reminds me of Pink Floyd's David Gilmour in that respect. When you listen to one of Gilmour's solos on, say, 'Comfortably Numb', his vibe is both obvious and unique. Nobody sounds like him, and that goes way beyond technique. The same thing is true of Neal. He creates something remarkable every time he picks up a guitar. Why isn't he more valued as a guitarist, because he's definitely up there with the elite? Maybe it's down to the fact that Journey were so huge in the '80s that everyone likes to put them down. Neal's often overlooked when people are discussing the finest guitarists in the history of rock. But knowing him the way I do – as a friend and as a musician – I understand his true value. And he proved it all over 'Through The Fire'."

THE ORIGINAL LINE-UP FOR THIS PROJECT WAS YOU AND NEAL, YOUR FORMER MONTROSE BANDMATE DENNY CARMASSI ON DRUMS, AND

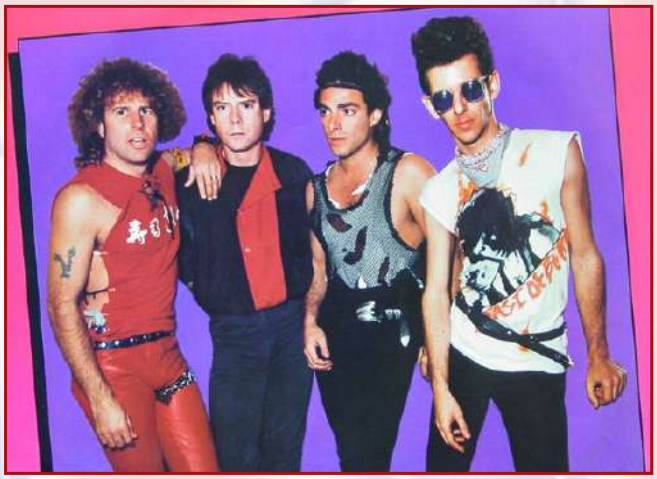
Photo: Getty Images/Chris Walter/WireImage

UNCOVERED

Sammy putting his heart and soul into the HSAS show at The Warfield Theater, San Francisco, 10 November 1983

CHEAP TRICK'S TOM PETERSSON ON BASS. WHY DIDN'T THAT LINE-UP STAY THE COURSE?
"It had nothing to do with the music; that was all fine. Denny was the obvious choice for me. We'd played together in Montrose and then he'd been in my solo band. I knew what he could do and it was right for this new group. But there was a conflict of schedules and in the end Denny wasn't available. It was different with Tom, though. It was Neal's idea to bring him in, and musically he was a great fit. But Tom demanded that his wife Dagmar had to be part of the band as well. He insisted that it was a condition of him joining, so we just told him it wasn't gonna happen and sent him on his way."

THAT'S A BIT OF A WOW! WHAT ROLE DID TOM HAVE IN MIND FOR HIS WIFE?
"He wanted her to be a second singer, but that was never even remotely on the cards. Tom and Neal had such a massive sound between them that even I was struggling to be heard. Adding another vocalist to the mix would have caused even more confusion. It's a shame, because Tom was working out well on the bass. But when you have someone making ludicrous demands like that, then you know something's not right. I can't tell you whether it was Tom's idea, or whether it was just his wife wanting to be a star and pushing him into it. I don't much care to be honest. Whatever, he was out of the picture."



"WHAT WERE WE THINKING?! THE TIGHT T-SHIRTS! THE LEATHER! WHAT A CLICHÉ! IF YOU EVER WANT TO SHOW A PHOTO THAT SUMS UP ALL THAT WAS WRONG WITH ROCK IN THAT DECADE, FEEL FREE TO USE THE ONE OF HSAS ON THE ALBUM SLEEVE."

SO HOW DID KENNY AARONSON AND MICHAEL SHRIEVE EVENTUALLY GET THE GIG?
"Geffen's A&R guy John Kalodner had a big hand in putting the line-up together. He'd signed me to Geffen as a solo artist and was actively involved in the development of this project. He was instrumental in getting Michael and Kenny involved."

WHO DECIDED ON THE HSAS NAME?
"We'd somehow come to the conclusion that it was best to use the initials of our surnames for the band name. Neal and I had written all the songs and had started the whole thing off, so our initials were going to come first, but it was hard deciding whether my initial should come ahead of Neal's, or whether it should be the other way around. Should it be HSAS or SHAS? I thought the way to decide it was to do things alphabetically, which would have meant 'H' before 'S'. But Neal wouldn't go along with that and the two of us butted heads. We'd often argue about things; we were like that. But even so, there was always quite a lot of joking involved. Sometimes I'd say to Neal, 'I'm a bigger rock star than you,' and he'd say the same thing right back at me. But it would always end with a chuckle and a hug. Eventually we decided to resolve the issue with a toss of a coin. I think I called heads. But I know whatever I called, the coin came down in my favour. So we became HSAS instead of SHAS. I think SHAS would have sounded terrible!"

WAS THE BAND A *REAL* BAND, OR WAS IT ALL ABOUT YOU AND NEAL?
"The two of us came up with the idea for the project and the two of us wrote all the songs before the rhythm section came in. But we were four equal musicians. Neither Neal nor I regarded ourselves as team leaders. It was very democratic once we had the line-up in place. Kenny and Michael were heavily involved all the way once they were in."

YOU NEVER LOOKED AT THE IDEA OF A BRAND NEW BAND NAME. WAS THAT BECAUSE YOU DIDN'T SEE THIS AS A LONG-TERM PROJECT?
"That's exactly what was in our minds. Neal was always going to go back to Journey and I had my own career to pursue as well. People might think that because the HSAS album was such a flop it led to the decision not to do anything else. But that's not true. Even if it had been a huge success, Neal and I had already agreed that we didn't want to do anything more. If the album had sold millions, then I'm sure there would have been some pressure from managers and the label for us to rethink things. But the record *wasn't* huge, so that never became an issue."

HOW DID YOU START THE PROCESS OF CREATING MUSIC TOGETHER?
"I went on a six week holiday to Africa and visited Egypt, which was something I'd never done before. As a rock musician I'd done a lot of travelling around America and Europe, but I hadn't really been anywhere else. But by going to Africa I got the opportunity to go on safari, and to see all sorts of incredible things. That inspired me to write lots of lyrics. So when I got back from my travels Neal and I met up and got the songs together. He'd play me a piece of music and I'd find a lyric to fit. Lyrically, pretty much everything was influenced by that vacation. I did have one interesting completed song of my own, though, but Neal rejected it."

OH, REALLY?
"You might have heard of it, actually. When I came back from Africa, my wife and I flew from Nairobi to London, then from London to New York, and finally from New York to Albany. Then we hired a car there so we could drive to see our son. On that journey I was driving at a speed of 62 miles an hour and got pulled over and given a ticket because the speed limit was 55. I remember turning to my wife and saying, 'I can't drive 55!' Obviously that sparked me into action, and so I wrote the song 'I Can't Drive 55'. I developed ►

Photo: Getty Images/Larry Hulst/Michael Ochs Archives;

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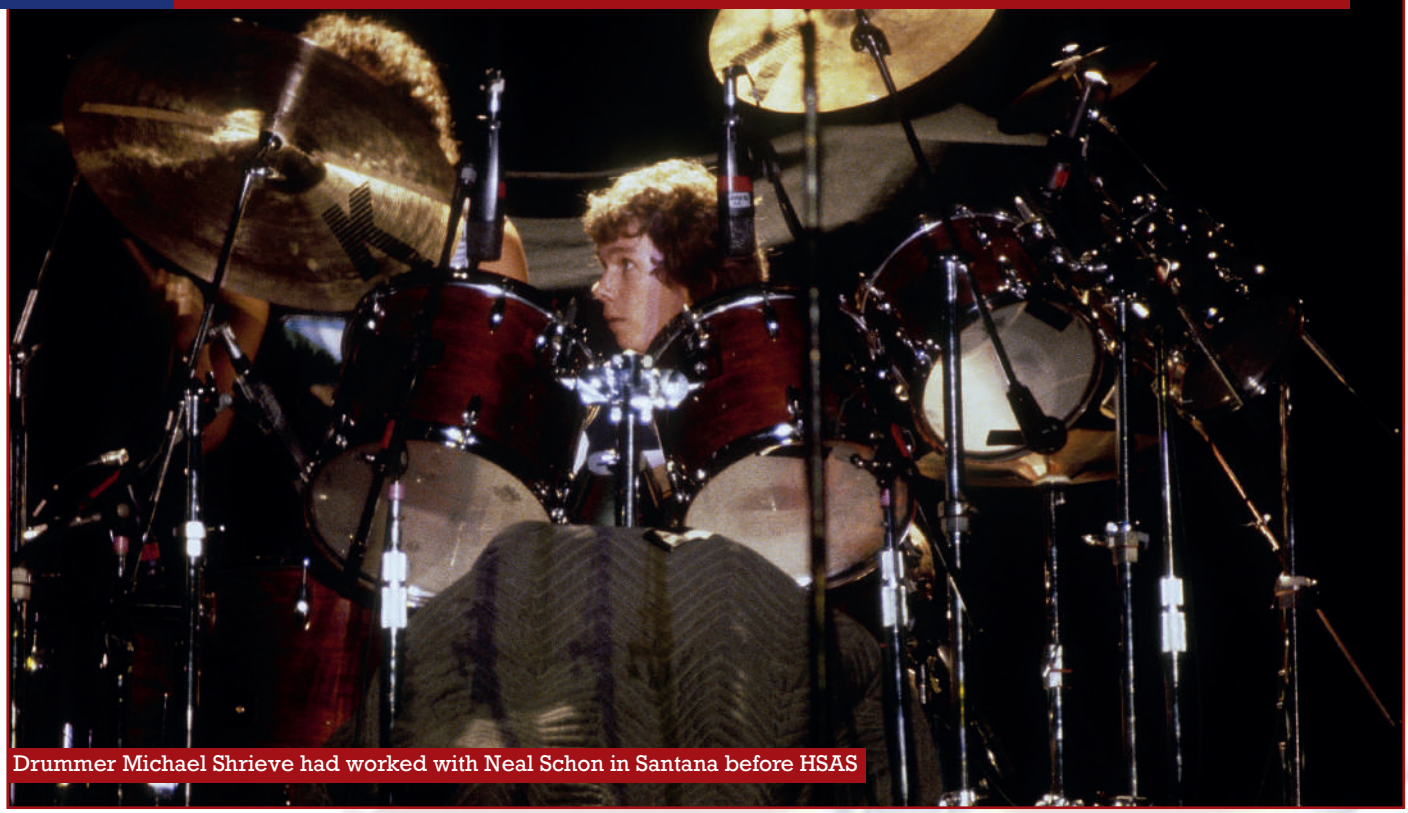


Drummer Michael Shrieve had worked with Neal Schon in Santana before HSAS

everything fully and then played the song to Neal. But he said, 'You've written this all by yourself. The idea on this album is that the two of us should collaborate.' So Neal told me to save the tune for one of my future solo albums. That's how 'I Can't Drive 55' ended up on my 'VOA' album that came out the same year as the HSAS record. It ended up being one of the biggest songs I've ever had, even bigger than anything I did in Van Halen. It's the gift that keeps on giving. I don't have to do anything and I still earn a lot of money from it, because it's always being used on computer games and what have you. Think of what would have happened to that song if it had ended up on the HSAS album. It would almost certainly have been forgotten about, because the album bombed. So I have to be grateful to Neal for having the 'foresight' to tell me to keep it for myself!"

ONE SONG THAT DID MAKE THE HSAS ALBUM WAS A COVER OF PROCOL HARUM'S 'WHITER SHADE OF PALE'. WHERE DID THAT NOTION COME FROM?

"That was my idea, because I love that song. It's one of my favourites of all time and is one of the greatest songs ever, maybe even *the* greatest. I have no clue what the lyrics are about, though. I don't know if anyone does. Maybe they came out of an acid trip. But who cares, really? Matthew Fisher's incredible organ playing is so melodic that it stays with you forever. It's funny, because whenever I talk about my biggest influences as a singer I tend to mention people like Paul Rodgers. I never speak about Gary Brooker from Procol Harum, but he's a big inspiration."

SO WHAT MAKES HIM AN IMPORTANT SINGER FOR YOU?

"When you listen to Gary you notice that he's constantly pushing himself to go into an ever higher register. It's amazing how he reaches for – and hits – those sorts of notes. I used to listen to the way he sang and try to emulate him, but I never had the confidence to go for it when I was in Montrose. Doing 'Whiter Shade Of Pale' in HSAS made me take baby steps in that direction. If you play the 'Through The Fire' album and compare it to what I'd done before, then you'll hear the difference. I was trying to sing higher – and I even surprised myself by pulling it off. I did it a lot more with Van Halen, because by then I knew I had the ability. But it all began with HSAS. So I owe a lot to Gary Brooker and Procol Harum and would like to thank them for helping to shape the singer I've become."

WHY DID YOU OPT TO RECORD A LIVE ALBUM AS A FIRST HSAS RELEASE, RATHER THAN A STUDIO SET?

"We thought that would allow us to present the songs a little differently. Not many bands would have the confidence to do that, especially on a debut album.

But the four of us were strong enough, both individually and as a band, to pull it off. We'd already decided to do eight charity shows [between 10 and 21 November 1983] around the California area. California had brought in a law called Proposition 13, which was all about property taxes, and somehow or other this had led to schools being underfunded around this time. We decided to donate all the money we made from any gig to local schools.

"It was once the dates were locked in that we hit on the idea of recording them for the debut album. Who else would be brave enough to do something crazy like that with songs nobody had even heard before? Some people might have seen us as a supergroup, but we thought this was a neat way of telling everyone that it was just four musicians messing around because we had nothing better to do. We were so well rehearsed that we weren't at all worried about going out in front of an audience and only playing new songs."

HSAS bassist Kenny Aaronson. Geffen A&R guru John Kalodner helped get him on board

"MAYBE WE SHOULD HAVE DONE A CONCEPT ALBUM OF SOME SORT. A LOT OF MY LYRICS WERE BASED ON A VISIT TO EGYPT, SO MAYBE WE HAD THE BASIS OF AN ALBUM IN THE PINK FLOYD STYLE, SOMETHING TO CAPTURE THE IMAGINATION."

THE SET YOU PLAYED LIVE INCLUDED SIX SONGS THAT DIDN'T MAKE IT ONTO THE ALBUM. CAN YOU TELL US WHY?

"When we listened back to the performances we decided those six songs were the weakest. Plus this was in the era before CDs, let alone downloads, so there was no room on vinyl for everything we played. If it had been a double LP then it would have been a different matter. But Geffen decided they didn't want to stretch to that format. That's why we had to leave out those half dozen tracks."

IT'S SURPRISING THAT THOSE SONGS HAVE NEVER SEEN THE LIGHT OF DAY ON A CD REISSUE...

"You'd have thought they would have, wouldn't you? Maybe the label has forgotten they even exist. You'd have to ask Geffen, really. If people like you reminded the label about them, maybe the next time there's a re-release they'll be included."

WAS THERE ANY STORY BEHIND CHOOSING THE ALBUM TITLE 'THROUGH THE FIRE'?

"That was Neal's idea, though I'm not sure how he came up with it. But I hated the title at the time – and I still do. And I've never liked the album cover, either. Journey had their own art department, so we left it to them to do the artwork. And let's not even talk about the band photos on the sleeve! They're so embarrassing, so '80s. The clothes we were wearing! Nowadays I just try to blot the images out of my mind. What *were* we thinking? The tight T-shirts! The leather! What a cliché. If you ever want to show a photo that sums up all that was wrong with rock in that decade, feel free to use the one of HSAS on the album sleeve."

WERE THERE ANY STUDIO OVERDUBS ON THE ALBUM TO ENHANCE THE 'LIVE' SOUND?

"There were some guitar overdubs on 'Whiter Shade Of Pale', but nothing else. I'm quite proud that all my singing was authentically live. If it had been left up to Neal, though, I reckon he'd have gone totally overboard ►

Photos: Getty Images/Larry Hulst/Michael Ochs Archives

UNCOVERED

Sammy and Neal. "I'm a bigger rock star than you"

and done 300 overdubs all through the album. But I was there to stop that kind of thing happening. Neal just loves being in the studio. He can be obsessive about recording to the point where he doesn't always know when to stop. It's fair to say that he's a workaholic – and he *lives* for music."

LIKE ANYONE ELSE WE KNOW?

"Well I'll hold my hands up to that, but I do have a lot of interests *outside* of music that keep me busy. There's my club, my tequila brand, and my books. Neal is fully immersed in his music to the exclusion of everything else. But that's one of the reasons why I admire him so much. He's a stunning guitarist, very underrated."

"NEAL WAS ALWAYS GOING TO GO BACK TO JOURNEY AND I HAD MY OWN CAREER TO PURSUE AS WELL. PEOPLE MIGHT THINK THAT BECAUSE OUR ALBUM WAS SUCH A FLOP IT LED TO THE DECISION NOT TO DO ANYTHING ELSE WITH HSAS. BUT THAT'S NOT TRUE."

WHAT ARE YOUR FAVOURITE SONGS ON THE HSAS ALBUM?

"I haven't listened to it in 15, maybe 20 years. I don't even think I own a copy on vinyl or CD. That sums up where it sits in my mind when I talk about the albums I've done. Thinking about it, I remember our version of 'Whiter Shade Of Pale', and I do love how we did it. 'Top Of The Rock' is another one that comes to mind. But for me that was way too cheesy and very '80s in the way it sounded. Apart from that, I can recall the titles of certain songs like 'Animation', 'Giza', and 'Missing You'. What did they sound like? I couldn't tell you. It's all lost in the mists of time."

HAVE YOU EVER DONE HSAS SONGS ON YOUR SAMMY SOLO TOURS?

"I've done two, 'Whiter Shade Of Pale' and 'Top Of The Rock'. I did them a few times, but I haven't played them in ages. So maybe it's time to put 'Whiter Shade Of Pale' back into my live set. Talking to you about HSAS has reawakened my interest in hearing the album again. So as soon as we've finished this interview I'm going to pour myself a cocktail, sit myself down and say, 'Alexa, play the HSAS album.' I have this odd feeling I'm going to realise it's a lot better than I remember. I'm even getting excited to revisit it. So, thank you *Rock Candy Mag* for bringing an album I'd almost forgotten back into my world!"

YOU'RE WELCOME! IN YOUR OPINION, WHY DID THE HSAS ALBUM FAIL TO SET THE WORLD ALIGHT?

"Oh, it was a commercial disaster. Everyone, including

us, expected massive success. Journey were selling five million copies of every album and I was selling over a million. Kenny and Michael were associated with big-selling acts and all that should have counted for something. But it didn't. The album died. I think we sold about 125,000 copies. Why? I have no idea. Maybe if we'd done everything in the studio, then things would have been different."

IT'S POSSIBLE...

"I also think maybe we should have done a concept album of some sort. A lot of my lyrics were based on that visit I made to Egypt, so maybe we had the basis of an album in the Pink Floyd style, something to capture the imagination. We could have then taken Neal off the leash, let him come up with massively multi-tracked guitars and created a really vast, panoramic sound. I think maybe that would have better represented the songs we had, rather than what we did. I guess we were guilty of underestimating what Neal and I had written."

ISN'T IT TRUE THAT MTV BROADCAST A LIVE HSAS SHOW? ANY IDEA WHY THIS HAS NEVER BEEN RELEASED ON DVD?

"MTV filmed all the shows, actually, and I assume they own the rights for the footage. Maybe that's why there's never been a proper commercial release. They probably have everything in their vaults. So if someone wants to take on the challenge of getting MTV to agree to letting that stuff come out, then I reckon it could still happen. But I'm not sure anyone connected with HSAS would have the time or inclination to do the negotiations at the moment."

I SAW SOME STUFF ON THE INTERNET SAYING THAT HSAS DID A 1984 CALIFORNIAN TOUR WITH SOMEONE CALLED NICK SCIORSCI PLAYING RHYTHM GUITAR...

"That's just an Internet rumour. We were all busy with other projects, so wouldn't have had the time even if we'd wanted to do it. I have no idea where this story came from. Nick Sciorsci? Never even heard of him!"

HAVE YOU AND NEAL EVER HAD THE URGE TO SCRATCH THE HSAS ITCH?

"No, we never have to be honest. We never looked on it as an ongoing project, though Neal and I did get back together in 2002 under the name Planet Us. Both Journey and Van Halen were taking a break and we played with Michael Anthony on bass and Deen Castronovo on drums. We also had Joe Satriani in with us briefly as a second guitarist. We recorded two songs ['Vertigo' and 'Peeping Through A Hole'], but it never went any further. I think we did 'Vertigo' for the first *Spiderman* movie, but the song was rejected and I understand why – not right for that film. Neal did a new version of 'Peeping Through A Hole' with another of his projects called Soul SirkUS [retitled 'Peephole', the song appeared on that band's 2004 'World Play' album]. But like HSAS, Planet Us was very short lived."

FINALLY SAMMY, IS THERE ANY CHANCE OF AN HSAS REUNION?

"Not right now, because I have other priorities. First I want to do another Chickenfoot album. Once that's done, then next on my list is an album from The Circle. Once those are done, and we've toured the sh*t out of them, then it's *possible* that a second HSAS album could be discussed. But it would need all four of us to be into the idea and that's a very long shot. I won't rule anything out, though. One thing I've noticed is that there's a real fan base for the album. It may not have sold many copies, but I've come across a lot of people who bought 'Through The Fire' and absolutely love it. They think it's one of the best records of my career. Those who like HSAS are fanatical in their devotion. So for their sake I don't want to mess up their dreams that one day we'll reform and do another album. So let's leave the door at least ajar for that to happen."

Photos: Getty Images/Randy Bachman; Getty Images/Larry Hulst/Michael Ochs Archives

The BTO line-up that recorded 'Not Fragile'. L-R: Randy Bachman (vocals and guitar), Blair Thornton (guitar), C.F. Turner (bass and vocals), Robbie Bachman (drums)

BACHMAN-TURNER OVERDRIVE 'NOT FRAGILE'

DATELINE: AUGUST 1974

THE THIRD BTO ALBUM FEATURES *THAT* SONG. BUT IS THERE MORE TO IT THAN 'YOU AIN'T SEEN NOTHING YET'?

BACHMAN-TURNER OVERDRIVE
'Not Fragile'
(Mercury)
Released: August 1974

LINE UP
RANDY BACHMAN – vocals, guitar
ROBBIE BACHMAN – drums, percussion
BLAIR THORNTON – guitar, backing vocals
C.F. TURNER – vocals, bass guitar
FRANK TROWBRIDGE – slide guitar on 'Blue Moanin''

PRODUCED BY
Randy Bachman
RECORDED AT
Kaye-Smith Studios, Seattle, Washington

TRACK LISTING
Not Fragile (C.F. Turner)
Rock Is My Life, And This Is My Song (Randy Bachman)
Roll On Down The Highway (C.F. Turner, Robbie Bachman)
You Ain't Seen Nothing Yet (Randy Bachman)
Free Wheelin' (Blair Thornton)
Sledgehammer (Randy Bachman)
Blue Moanin' (C.F. Turner)
Second Hand (Randy Bachman)
Givin' It All Away (Blair Thornton)

RANDY BACHMAN ON 'NOT FRAGILE': "It's the band's crowning achievement. This was when it all came together for us. We captured the album-oriented rock audience, as well as the singles audience, with that album. 'Not Fragile' made BTO recognised around the world."

BY THE TIME OF 1974's 'Not Fragile' Bachman-Turner Overdrive had already released two albums – 'Bachman-Turner Overdrive' and 'Bachman-Turner Overdrive II' – both of which had appeared in 1973. The second release had coughed up a US hit single, 'Takin' Care Of Business', but it was 'Not Fragile', the Canadian group's third album, that really delivered major success.

The record marked the debut of guitarist Blair Thornton who replaced Tim Bachman, one of three brothers in the original BTO line-up. He'd been asked to leave after apparently failing to adhere to brother Randy's strict Mormon code within the group prohibiting drugs, alcohol, and pre-marital sex on tour. Thornton was a better guitarist than Tim anyway, and so added an extra dimension to Bachman-Turner Overdrive that the first two albums had lacked.

Armed with this new twin guitar attack the four piece – with a little help from American slide guitarist Frank Trowbridge on the track 'Blue Moanin'' – went into Kaye-Smith Studios in Seattle and recorded the album that would transform their lives.

THE INTENTION WAS THAT THIS WOULD BE A HEAVY ALBUM. THE COVER FEATURED A STURDY CRATE FILLED WITH CHUNKY MACHINE PARTS MADE OUT OF METAL. AND THE MUSIC MATCHED THE MESSAGE.

THE INTENTION was that this would be a heavy album and BTO were none too subtle about making the point. The title offered a cheeky nod to Yes's 1971 album 'Fragile', while the cover featured a sturdy crate filled with chunky machine parts made out of metal. But at least the music matched the message.

The stomping title track and album opener makes a significant statement of intent. It's time to rock! The combination of a thunderous riff, Turner's gravelly vocals, and a slow mid-section that showcases Thornton and Bachman's dual lead-guitar work shows BTO fans exactly what's in store.

'Sledgehammer' is another bone-breaker, with vocals shared between Turner and Randy Bachman and featuring a titanic riff that still has the ability to stun 47 years after it was first recorded. 'Second Hand', meanwhile, feels almost like one long, wonderful, howling guitar solo.

Despite the overall intention, though, it's not all crash and smash here. BTO might have been unpretentious, but they were not always unsophisticated. 'Rock Is My Life, And This Is My Song' has light and shade, introspective lyrics and even a little bit of jazzy lead from Randy Bachman at times. The verses in particular show a delicacy of touch and style that are often overlooked whenever BTO are reappraised.

'NOT FRAGILE' delivered two big hit singles. One of them was a hymn to long-distance trucking appropriately titled 'Roll On Down The Highway'. The band had originally been asked to write something for a commercial by the Ford motor company, but the tune was not picked up for an ad. The second hit from the album, of course, was 'You Ain't Seen Nothing Yet'.

The song was originally written as a joke, and the band didn't even intend to put it on the album. After pressure from the record label, though, writer Randy Bachman gave in, and the song was included. Bachman certainly had no interest in releasing the tune as a single, either, but once it became the number one most phone-requested tune in Los Angeles he gave way. "OK, put it out," he snapped. "But it will be the end of the band!"

Of course it was nothing of the sort. 'You Ain't Seen Nothing Yet' became BTO's hugest hit by far, hitting the number one spot in both the US and Canada. It still stands up today as a perfect mix of big sing-along chorus, chunky power chords, flowing guitar lines, and that famous stuttered delivery.

'NOT FRAGILE' is a short album. It contains just nine songs and runs to a very conservative 36 minutes. But the record's appeal lies in the fact that tunes that appear simple on first listen turn out to be deceptively complex, bearing repeated spins while successfully straddling all of the heavy metal, rock, and pop genres.

Do all the songs shine brightly? If I'm honest, album closer 'Givin' It All Away' (credited to Thornton, but not a patch on his other writing contribution, the instrumental 'Free Wheelin'') is, for me, just too meat and potatoes to pass muster. But we shouldn't hold that one minor blip against 'Not Fragile'. This is an album that not only includes some genuine classics, but also contains music that sounds vital and virile nearly 50 years after it was first released.

HAVING SOLD more than 3.5 million copies to date, 'Not Fragile' is Bachman-Turner Overdrive's most successful non-compilation album and it's easy to see why. Here's where you should come if you fancy being transported back to a time when rock music was good old, straight-ahead meaty fun!

ROSS SAMPSON

ORIGINAL REVIEW

"What BTO lack in imagination, subtlety, technique, structural dynamics, flash *et al*., they more than compensate for with lots of volume... it's hard not to like this album and BTO."

– Gordon Fletcher, *Rolling Stone*, 24 October 1974

'NOT FRAGILE' FACT: 'You Ain't Seen Nothing Yet' was originally recorded with the stuttering vocals as a joke for Randy's younger brother Gary, who had a speech impediment. Curiously enough, by the time the song had become a monster hit Gary had lost his stutter!

Photos: Getty Images/Michael Ochs Archives

STRIKTLY FOR KONNOISSEURS

MONSTER ROCK ALBUMS FOR THOSE WHO NEED TO GO DEEPER

TROYKA – 'Troyka'

(COTILLION)

ORIGINAL RELEASE DATE – 1970

LINE UP
MIKE EDWARDS – LEAD VOCALS, DRUMS
ROBERT EDWARDS – GUITAR, MANDOLIN, VOCALS
RUMOR LUKAWIETSKY – BASS, BONGOS, VOCALS

DIGGING INTO THE DARKEST recesses of late-'60s and early-'70s rock music produces gifts that keep on giving. When the children of the 1960s pop single scene mutated into 1970s album-buying consumers, suddenly rock became an art form. And when record companies saw that there was money to be made, it seemed that if you had long hair and wore an Afghan coat, then you stood a chance of getting signed. Most groups that didn't make the grade were no-hopers, but the odd wonderful and unique band sometimes got lost along the way as well. Canada's Troyka is a case in point. Their one and only record, released in 1970, is a wonderful, magical thing that breaks all the rules, yet positively thrives in doing so.

Troyka started life as The Royal Family and enjoyed a modicum of success in their native Edmonton in the mid-'60s. They built their own recording studio, Round Sound, and that's where Cotillion Records sent Gene 'Son Of Les' Paul to engineer Troyka's debut album.

'TROYKA' EXUDES enormous confidence and chutzpah. The band – the offspring of Ukrainian immigrants – was nominally a power trio. But the music's textured layers suggest that there was much, much more to this group. This record feels more like a movie soundtrack than a traditional album, especially because the clutch of songs that form its backbone are interspersed with a chain of astonishing instrumental vignettes.

'Troyka' isn't an easy listen. Mike Edwards spits out guttural vocals that are more a series of grunted growls. Think proto death metal. The musical structures, meanwhile, veer from Slavic folk played on classical guitar, through squalling heavy metal riffs, ethereal psychedelia, and even completely unhinged acid rock jams. The whole thing is so madcap – and yet at the same time so captivatingly beautiful – that half the time you're wondering whether it's entirely serious. Think Captain Beefheart at his most out-there, especially because the lyrics – when you can actually hear them – are utterly nonsensical.

TAKE A listen to the balls-out trio of 'Rolling Down The Back Road', 'Burning Of The Witch', and 'Natural' for a great dollop of metal. Check out 'Early Morning' and 'Dear Margaret (Malgosia)' for your recommended daily intake of gorgeous chiming guitar mixed with mandolin and bongos. And get it on with 'Life's OK', 'Berry Picking', and the six-minute-plus 'Go East Young Man/ Beautiful Pink Eyes' to visit a world of totally unhinged jamming. The only way I can describe this heady dose of musical experimentation is the cast of *Fiddler On The Roof* moonlighting as a Black Sabbath tribute act after ingesting some especially strong acid.

IF EARLY-'70S progressive rock has one overriding fault it's that it was largely an overly po-faced genre whose practitioners took themselves terribly seriously. Not so Troyka, who made one incredibly enjoyable, downright fun record.

Giles Hamilton

TORONTO – 'Lookin' For Trouble'

(SOLID GOLD RECORDS)

ORIGINAL RELEASE DATE – 1980

LINE UP
HOLLY WOODS – LEAD VOCALS
SHERON ALTON – GUITAR
BRIAN ALLEN – GUITAR
SCOTT KREYER – KEYBOARDS
NICK COSTELLO – BASS GUITAR
JIMMY FOX – DRUMS

GUITARIST BRIAN ALLEN WAS originally a member of Canadian outfit Rose, a semi-progressive rock band that cut four albums in the '70s. Drummer Jimmy Fox joined him on the last two records the group made, both for Polydor, both in 1977. Singer Annie 'Holly' Woods, meanwhile, also joined the band for a brief period toward the end of Rose's lifespan.

THE TRIO'S next project, originally called Sass, saw them recruiting keyboardist Scott Kreyer, guitarist Sheron Alton, and bassist Nick Costello, before eventually deciding on the name Toronto. This despite the fact that Woods was from North Carolina, Alton was born in London, and Kreyer, Costello, and Fox all came from New York State. Allen was the only true Canadian. Months of rehearsing and demoing failed to secure the band a major recording contract, so their managers formed their own label, Solid Gold, to issue Toronto's music.

WELL-KNOWN Canadian musicians Bill Henderson and Brian MacLeod (both originally from the band Chilliwack) came on board as producers of their debut album and were able to capture Toronto's great combination of melody and muscle. However the original cover for 'Lookin' For Trouble' – designed by Rush artist Hugh Syme and originally intended for Max Webster's 'High Class In Borrowed Shoes' – came in for severe criticism because it featured a photo of a young girl looking like an underage prostitute. The sleeve was changed for the US and European markets.

THE ALBUM shows a band performing in a number of musical styles, all of them brought together by Holly Woods's four-octave vocals and the tasteful guitar skills of Sheron Alton. Imagine the new wave power pop of The Cars meeting the hard rock of Heart, with a touch of Pat Benatar thrown in for good measure.

The LP's opening number, 'Even The Score', is a prime example of what Toronto were good at. The song pushes along on an irresistible chorus, with Woods clearly rivalling the magnificent Ann Wilson in the vocal department. The new wave pop perfection of '5035', meanwhile, really should have been a smash hit. Still, both 'Even The Score' and the album's title track did well in Canada, helping the LP to rack up more than 100,000 domestic sales. Sadly the band's impressive cover of 'You Better Run' – originally a hit for The Young Rascals in the '60s – couldn't help the album break through in the US when it was released, probably because Pat Benatar's version of the song made the US Top 50 in the same year.

TORONTO REMAINED popular in Canada for a few years, but mainstream fame somehow eluded them. Imagine, though, how different things might have been had they not taken the decision to leave a song they'd written called 'What About Love' off their 1982 album 'Get It On Credit'. Three years later it was a monster worldwide hit for Heart.

Rob Evans

Photo: Getty Images/Keith Beaty/Toronto Star

ROCK CANDY REISSUES

THE VERY LATEST HOT RE-RELEASE FROM THE LABEL

THE FRANKIE MILLER BAND – 'The Rock'

ORIGINAL RELEASE DATE – 1975

LINE UP
FRANKIE MILLER – vocals and rhythm guitar
HENRY MCCULLOUGH – lead guitar and vocal backing
MICK WEAVER – keyboards
CHRISSY STEWART – bass guitar
STU PERRY – drums and percussion

BACKGROUND
Glaswegian singer Frankie Miller is regarded as one of the all-time great vocalists, standing tall among a select group of British singers that include Rod Stewart, Paul Rodgers, and Joe Cocker. But Miller isn't just a voice. He's also a fine songwriter, and has penned tunes that have been covered by several prestigious artists including Bob Seger, UFO, and Bonnie Tyler. Frankie's credentials are second to none, yet he's never been the commercial success his abilities surely merit. 'The Rock' is Miller's third album, originally issued in 1975. It saw him moving away from using backing musicians to forming a permanent band featuring players such as former Wings guitarist Henry McCullough, Eire Apparent bassist Chrissy Stewart, and in-demand keyboardist Mick Weaver, also known as Wynder K Frog!

'The Rock' was recorded in San Francisco with Neil Young producer Elliot Mazer, its title referring to the infamous Alcatraz Island in San Francisco Bay, site of the notorious prison. It's a refined album of forceful blues-based rock that still allows Miller's vocals to punch through in front of some of his best songs. Mazer's production makes the record sound hard-hitting yet organic, providing a sympathetic backdrop against which Miller is really able to shine. Listening to it, it's easy to understand why Frankie is held in such high esteem by both fellow musicians and fans.

WHAT KEYBOARDIST MICK WEAVER SAYS
"On the title track Frankie took time to muse over the stark fact that had he not become a singer, then he might well have ended up behind bars. His second cousin was Jimmy Boyle, a notorious Glaswegian villain. Miller even wrote on the album sleeve: "The song 'The Rock' is dedicated to the plight of prisoners." The cover picture was taken at Frankie's apartment in Sausalito. Because of the album title there's obviously a rock in the shot. But what people may not know is that it wasn't a real rock at all; rather a polystyrene one! That was safer, just in case Frankie decided to be playful and throw it at someone!"

TRACKS TO CHECK OUT
The album includes a number of great moments including 'Ain't Got No Money', 'The Rock', 'A Fool In Love' (co-written by Free bassist Andy Fraser), 'I'm Old Enough', and the gritty blues rock of 'All My Love To You'. You should also check out the moving lament to Frankie's home area, 'Bridgeton', a soul-searching paean to the changing landscape of post-war Glasgow.

MORE BANG FOR YOUR BUCK
The Rock Candy CD is fully remastered, features six bonus tracks, a 12-page colour booklet with enhanced artwork, and a 4000-word interview with former band members conducted by *Rock Candy Magazine* editor-at-large Malcolm Dome.

THE WORD FROM RC BOSS DEREK OLIVER
"Many people believe Frankie Miller was constantly developing as an artist and never made a bad record. And 'The Rock' clearly shows the singer's commitment to improving, album after album. The impact 'The Rock' made on those who heard it was profound, reinforcing the notion that here was a serious talent merely biding his time before reaching the top. Regardless of his success or otherwise, by the time 'The Rock' appeared in 1975 Frankie's voice had already secured him his place in the pantheon of great performers."

Buy this album and tons of other great releases at *www.rockcandyrecords.com*

ROCK CANDY PICKS

THE STUFF THAT'S GRABBED OUR ATTENTION

LEE AARON 'Radio On!'

(METALVILLE)

WHAT'S THE STORY?

At a time before even the first COVID-19 wave, Canada's Metal Queen and her three-piece band locked themselves away in a room for a weekend, aiming to tap into the influences that inspired them as teenagers and, most importantly of all, to have some fun. The result is Lee Aaron's third studio set since returning to the realm of hard rock after deviating to jazz and pop in the 2000s. Self-produced, the first-take recordings were then passed to Mike Fraser, whose mixing work for AC/DC, Aerosmith, and Van Halen speaks for itself.

WHAT DOES IT SOUND LIKE?

It's clear that Lee and her drumming husband John Cody, guitarist Sean Kelly, and bassist Dave Reimer achieved their goal of having fun, and 'Radio On!' bottles the quarantine-busting *joie de vivre* of playing music again in a garage with a bunch of mates. Kelly, a veteran of Helix, Coney Hatch, and his own outfit Crash Kelly, knows how to keep his riffs varied and exciting. Meanwhile, the album's diverse and thoughtful lyrical subject matter – discussing empowerment, mortality, addiction, and celebrity among other subjects – beefs up the spontaneous feel of the songs..

BEST BITS

Album opener 'Vampin'' is a turn-it-up-to-11 guitar anthem straight out of the 1970s. 'Soul Breaker' flips the gender role of the traditional deceiver/manipulator figure, while the rhythmic swagger of 'Mama Don't Remember' sounds for all the world like a number for Suzi Quatro. Aaron's heartily delivered love letter to AM radio is a worthy title track. Meanwhile, her bump and grinding ode to instant attraction, 'Had Me At Hello', will surely set some temperatures rising..

THE VERDICT

Going back to something you first did decades ago can be undignified. It took Lita Ford a while to find her feet again, but Lee Aaron has had no such issues. Her hearty commitment to rock'n'roll, and her ability to keep on delivering, are now surely beyond dispute.

Dave Ling

CREAM 'Live At The Forum'

(UMC/POLYDOR)

WHAT'S THE STORY?

The original incarnation of Cream formed in 1966 and only lasted until 1968, but in that time drummer Ginger Baker, vocalist and bassist Jack Bruce, and guitarist and vocalist Eric Clapton pretty much invented the notion of the power trio. This is the first time that Cream's full 1968 LA Forum show – when the band had already announced they were splitting – has been released on vinyl. It's a blue, two-disc set and simply takes one of four complete 1968 shows that had originally been released on a four-CD set called 'Goodbye Tour – Live 1968' back in 2020.

WHAT GUITARIST AND VOCALIST ERIC CLAPTON SAYS

"Cream was a shambling circus of diverse personalities who happened to find that catalyst together... Any one of us could have played unaccompanied for a good length of time. So you put the three of us together in front of an audience willing to dig it limitlessly, we could have gone on forever... and we did, just going for the moon every time we played."

ANY EXTRAS?

None at all. Three of these Forum songs; 'I'm So Glad', 'Politician', and 'Sitting On Top Of The World', had already appeared on the 1969 album, 'Goodbye', together with three studio recordings. And all of the seven 'extras' here – including a spoken intro from legendary drummer Buddy Miles that refers to the band as "three really outta sight groovy cats" – were on that 2020 four-CD release.

HIGHLIGHTS

The overall highlight is hearing Clapton play with the fire and heavy rock energy that he left behind when he started wearing suits in the '80s. That was the price he paid for sobriety, and nobody could ever hold that against him. But here, on hyper-amplified blues-based numbers like 'Sitting On Top Of The World', 'I'm So Glad', and 'Crossroads', you can hear a man wringing out his demons on the fretboard of his guitar. The recording quality is primitive, but the groove this band had still shines through.

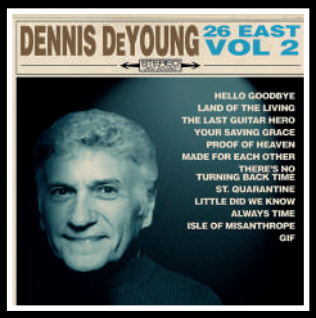
Howard Johnson

ROCK CANDY PICKS

THE STUFF THAT'S GRABBED OUR ATTENTION

DENNIS DEYOUNG '26 East Vol 2'

(FRONTIERS)



WHAT'S THE STORY?

He's the man with the plan. Dennis, God bless him, has remained true to his objective here and has delivered a record that contains the songs not included on his last album, the well-received '26 East Vol 1' from 2020. Amazingly there's no drop in quality with this release, which you might have expected from 'leftovers' from the first volume. Dennis says this is his last album and all 12 songs echo the glory days of Styx, the band that has steadfastly and, in my opinion, rather foolishly refused to engage with their erstwhile singer and keyboard player.

WHAT DOES IT SOUND LIKE?

The songwriting is sublime and the execution is simply knockout. Some of Dennis's rejuvenation is down to Jim Peterik, of Survivor fame, who's done his best to support Dennis and contributed four co-written songs here. Listening to the entire album you'll be blown away by its resemblance to prime-time Styx – without a hint of pastiche. The vibe here is that Dennis has pulled out all the stops to sign off with a nod and a wink to his loyal fanbase.

BEST BITS

I'd like to draw your attention to the heaviosity of 'Land Of The Living', which suggests the pomp and majesty of the 'Paradise Theatre' era. Then move on to 'The Last Guitar Hero', a truly explosive rocker lamenting the passing of genuine axemen and featuring the brilliant work of Rage Against The Machine's Tom Morello. 'Your Saving Grace', meanwhile, suckles from Styx classic 'The Best Of Times', while the vocals and arrangement in 'Proof Of Heaven' reach right back to the band's 1977 masterpiece 'The Grand Illusion'.

THE VERDICT

Possibly Dennis's greatest achievement on this record is the quality of his vocal performances. He's one of the few singers from the '70s and '80s to have retained – or even improved – his delivery. When he's making music this good I hope and pray that Dennis reconsiders his decision to retire.

Derek Oliver

ELECTRIC BOYS 'Ups!de Down'

(MIGHTY MUSIC)

WHAT'S THE STORY?

Well, the story with Sweden's Electric Boys is pretty much the age-old 'we coulda been contenders...' Cast as part of the funk metal movement at the tail end of the '80s with early hit 'All Lips N' Hips' and debut album 'Funk-O-Metal Carpet Ride', perhaps they did deserve to be lumped in with Extreme, Dan Reed Network *et al* as bands that briefly troubled the scorers, before slipping beneath the tides of fashion. But they had, in vocalist and guitarist Conny Bloom, a genuine talent unconstrained by labels. After Electric Boys he and close friend/bassist Andy Christell were to join Hanoi Rocks, while Bloom also hooked up with Ginger Wildheart in Silver Ginger 5.

WHAT DOES IT SOUND LIKE?

Bloody good, actually. This is a hard rock album of terrific variety and class. If it put me in mind of anyone else it was another overlooked '80s/'90s act, Enuff Z'Nuff, along with Bloom's sometime collaborator Ginger's band The Wildhearts. Not too many bands have the swagger to kick a record off with a seven-minute instrumental, and few are good enough to produce one as fine as 'Upside Down Theme', a song that draws as much from thunderous Led Zep rhythms as it does from slick guitar mastery. From then on, it's big vocal hooks and power riffing all the way.

BEST BITS

Lead-off track 'Super God' is the first of two or three mighty earworms, soon joined by 'Tumblin' Dominoes' and the excellent, semi-acoustic 'She Never Turns Around'. My only criticism would be that the band overplay their hand at the death by including the somewhat perfunctory and throwaway funk metal of 'Interstellafella'.

THE VERDICT

I have to say that this is a tremendously happy surprise. 'Ups!de Down' is a record that oozes both joy and passion, and while it's rather too late in the day to talk about concepts like stardom and mega sales, 'Ups!de Down' is an album that once upon a time might have attracted such excitement.

Jon Hotten

BILLY F GIBBONS 'Hardware'

(CONCORD RECORDS)

WHAT'S THE STORY?
ZZ Top guitarist Billy F Gibbons releases his third solo album, recorded at Escape Studios in California's high desert. Ex-Guns N' Roses member Matt Sorum plays drums, and he and Billy are joined in the core band by guitarist Austin Hanks. Both featured on Gibbons's 2018 award-winning solo album 'The Big Bad Blues'. This new album's title is an affectionate nod to the late Joe Hardy, ZZ Top's engineer going back to the mid-1980s.

WHAT DOES IT SOUND LIKE?
Lean and mean with a desert sheen. As Gibbons says, "The desert setting lends an element of intrigue reflected in the sounds created out there." Sonically-speaking, the environment affected all the songs and the entire album sounds both subtly produced and somewhere between modern and retro in the mix.

BEST BITS
Among the rockers, the punchy first single 'West Coast Junkie' and the loping 'Stackin' Bones' with guests Larkin Poe are both strong. However, two slower numbers are also outstanding. 'Vagabond Man' is Gibbons emoting at his best, with some delicate multi-styled guitar playing that brings together perfectly what he calls the three Ts – "tone, taste, and tenacity." Album closer 'Desert High', meanwhile, is a complete revelation, as welcome as it is unexpected. It's a spoken-word piece with snakelike, sinewy guitar and a cracker of a closing solo. The words and sounds created here evoke the desert in which it was recorded so well that I expected a rattlesnake to slither past as I listened!

THE VERDICT
This is a rock-orientated album, but it successfully straddles many musical genres, from hard rock and metal to blues, new wave, and even country! It's all unmistakably Billy F Gibbons, though, and shows that rock's old guard can still deliver music that sounds vital, relevant and engaging. Above all, this feels like an album where Gibbons is enjoying himself enormously, and that makes it easier for us to enjoy it too.

Ross Sampson

PAUL GILBERT 'Werewolves Of Portland'

(THE PLAYERS CLUB)

WHAT'S THE STORY?
This is the master guitarist's second solo album since Mr. Big split up two years ago, and his 16th overall in a career that's also seen Gilbert make an impact with Racer X as one of the pre-eminent guitar craftsmen of his generation. He plays every instrument you hear on this album, so this is literally a solo effort.

WHAT DOES IT SOUND LIKE?
If you know Gilbert's many previous albums then of course you'd expect a lot of virtuoso playing from the man. And you'd be correct in that assumption. However, 'Werewolves Of Portland' is a really diverse collection of tracks in terms of influences. Perhaps surprisingly, Gilbert has brought in even more progressive and complex structures than he usually goes for, while never forgetting the importance of melody to nail the musicianly moments together.

BEST BITS
There are two songs written about Dimitri Shostakovich. Both 'Professorship At The Leningrad Conservatory' and 'A Thunderous Ovation Shook The Columns' carry certain motifs from the great Russian classical composer, and are blessed with performances of depth and passion. The title cut has Gilbert's guitar doing a more-than-passable imitation of a wolf howling, while 'Arguments About Pie' is a little quirky, inspired by Gilbert's love for strawberry rhubarb pie from a local cake shop! It's perhaps the album's standout track, too, mixing exhaustive guitar power with a raw simplicity.

THE VERDICT
Lockdown allowed Gilbert to take his time over the recording process and he was able to both review and refine the music as he went along. This approach reaps benefits in the way the album flows so well. And if you wonder where the title of the work comes from, here's Gilbert's explanation: "Initially I was just thinking about the Warren Zevon song 'Werewolves Of London'. Living in Portland I thought it would be funny to substitute the name of my much lesser-known city."

Malcolm Dome

Photo: Blain Clausen

ROCK CANDY PICKS

THE STUFF THAT'S GRABBED OUR ATTENTION

HELLOWEEN 'Helloween'

(NUCLEAR BLAST)

WHAT'S THE STORY?
When a band choose to make an album eponymous, it tends to feel like a mark of confidence and suggests that they consider the record to be their definitive work. What's really boosted anticipation for 'Helloween' to stratospheric levels, though, is the return of both vocalist Michael Kiske and vocalist/guitarist Kai Hansen. Rather than replacing anyone these classic members are instead augmenting Helloween and making it the seven-piece dream team that global audiences witnessed on the Pumpkins United tour of 2017/18. This means three singers (Kiske, Hansen, and Andi Deris), three guitarists (Hansen, Sascha Gerstner, and founder Michael Weikath) and one killer record.

WHAT DOES IT SOUND LIKE?
As many fans hoped, 'Helloween' often recalls the band's late-'80s 'The Keeper Of The Seven Keys' era, but with no blatant re-treads and no ballad. This album focuses on high-octane energy and power, with the new tri-vocal arrangement truly coming into its own on the blazing choruses. This is state-of-the-art Euro metal from men who have mastered their craft.

BEST BITS
There are lots. Second track 'Fear Of The Fallen' is the most instant song, with a chorus that hits ear-popping notes. 'Best Time' is a mid-tempo anthem in the general vein of previous uplifting Helloween singles like 'I Want Out', while the speedy 'Robot King' soars beautifully. And let's not forget 'Indestructible', with its properly gorgeous chorus. Kai Hansen has only written one song for the album, not counting a little interlude titled 'Orbit'. But the good news is that it's the epic lead single 'Skyfall' – fully 12 minutes of tuneful metal genius.

THE VERDICT
It's a joy to see a veteran band jettison egos and come together to celebrate their career, while still making great music. This is the most wonderfully electrifying Helloween record since those classic 'The Keeper Of The Seven Keys' albums.

Jason Arnopp

LYNYRD SKYNYRD 'Live At Knebworth '76'

(EAGLE ROCK ENTERTAINMENT)

DVD

WHAT'S THE STORY?
For the first time ever the entire performance from Lynyrd Skynyrd's 1976 Knebworth gig supporting the Rolling Stones is available. That show revealed Skynyrd at the absolute height of their powers, and their scorching 11-song set couldn't help but win over the majority of the estimated 150,000 present on that hot summer day.

WHAT GUITARIST GARY ROSSINGTON SAYS
"We started 'Freebird' and the whole crowd was really rocking. Toward the end, [vocalist] Ronnie [Van Zant] directed [guitarist] Allen [Collins] to go to the front. Allen was kind of hesitant, because there was a rule not to go out on the tongue [which was jutting out at the front of the stage], because that was for the Stones. So Ronnie walked us all the way down just to defy their order. Mick Jagger was mad!"

ANY EXTRAS?
On the Blu Ray edition there's a feature-length documentary, *If I Leave Here Tomorrow* full of rarely-seen home movies and hilarious tales of the band's antics. "Allen Collins used to sniff glue when we first met him," says bassist and sadly deceased founder member Larry Junstrom. "You could put a model airplane together with his breath!" What the documentary makes abundantly clear is that Ronnie Van Zant was definitely the driving force of the band. "Ronnie was the boss," producer Al Kooper recalls. "I feared him." Ronnie may have run his band like a bootcamp, but who can argue with his methodology when the results were so consistently spectacular?

THE VERDICT
The whole set is a joy to listen to, but Skynyrd move it up a notch and really smoke on the last four songs – 'Call Me The Breeze', 'T For Texas', 'Sweet Home Alabama', and 'Freebird'. On the DVD it's great to see Van Zant beckoning guitarists Collins, Rossington, and Steve Gaines forward for the chicken-scratch guitar-solo climax of the song. I was there – and it's exactly as I remember it. Pure Southern rock mayhem!

Xavier Russell

ROBIN MCAULEY 'Standing On The Edge'

(FRONTIERS)

WHAT'S THE STORY?
Former Grand Prix, Far Corporation, and McAuley Schenker Group vocalist Robin McAuley returns with what is only his second solo album. His first, 'Business As Usual', was released in 1999. This is a record that finds him working with Alessandro Del Vecchio; record label Frontiers' go-to multi-tasking producer and songwriter. Assembled during 2020, the bulk of the recording work was handled by Del Vecchio's team, although special guest and former Heart guitarist Howard Leese independently recorded his parts on 'Supposed To Do Now' (which he co-penned).

WHAT DOES IT SOUND LIKE?
I was pleasantly surprised that my fear this would sound like many of the other records Del Vecchio has had a hand in of late were allayed. While the lighter moments ('Late December' and 'Run Away') are a bit twee, and a couple of other songs don't really come up to scratch, 'Standing On The Edge' is a record that should still entice others besides McAuley fans to part with hard-earned cash.

BEST BITS
The heavier stuff is excellent. The Dokken-esque title track takes some beating, Andrea Seveso going for broke with some George Lynch-style guitar heroics. 'Say Goodbye' is strong as well, while 'Chosen Few' is another great tune. At first I wasn't convinced about opener 'Thy Will Be Done', but it's a real grower, and that Leese co-write has a great bluesy feel to it. While 'Running Out Of Time' closes the album strongly, the melodic 'Like A Ghost' – co-penned by McAuley and his erstwhile Grand Prix mate, keyboardist Phil Lanzon – is perhaps the pick of the bunch!

THE VERDICT
There are parts of 'Standing...' that don't quite cut the mustard. If you replaced Robin's vocals with Frank DiMino's on 'Do You Remember' then you'd have a latter-day Angel B-side, and 'Wanna Take A Ride' is way too throwaway. Overall, though, this really is a sterling effort from Mr McAuley.

Dave Reynolds

GARY MOORE 'How Blue Can You Get'

(PROVOGUE)

WHAT'S THE STORY?
2021 marks a decade since the passing of Gary Moore, who died of a heart attack at just 58 years old. He passed at a time when his restless career had settled into an acclaimed and productive run of blues album, beginning with his breakthrough 1990 release, 'Still Got The Blues'. Moore's virtuosity was never in doubt, but if anything he was perhaps just a little bit *too* versatile, spending many of his middle years moving back and forth between mainstream hard rock, power ballads, and raw blues.

WHAT DOES IT SOUND LIKE?
"Venturing deep into the Moore family archives, some previously unheard and unreleased deep cuts and alternative versions surfaced," runs the press blurb. Exciting for fans, but we can never know the reason why Moore chose not to release the material at the time of recording. Does it sound how he wanted? There are two "unheard and unreleased Moore originals," one of which, 'In My Dreams', is redolent of 'Parisienne Walkways', while the other, 'Looking At Your Picture', is a much less well-realised, but somehow more intriguing lo-fi boogie. Elsewhere you'll find Moore's ferociously played take on songs by Freddie King, BB King, Elmore James, and Memphis Slim.

BEST BITS
'In My Dreams' throws up a strong hint of where Moore may have taken his talents in the later years that were so cruelly denied to him. It's the kind of thing that an elder statesman of music might do – and is supremely well-crafted and beautifully recorded. Moore's blues playing was never subtle, though. What he does best on 'I'm Tore Down' and 'Steppin' Out' is let rip with a rare power.

THE VERDICT
Not all searches down the back of the studio sofa bear fruit, but it's fair to say that this one has. It's a series of tracks Moore may not have chosen to put on a single disc, but for fans and collectors desperate to hear from him again, it's a worthwhile set.

Jon Hotten

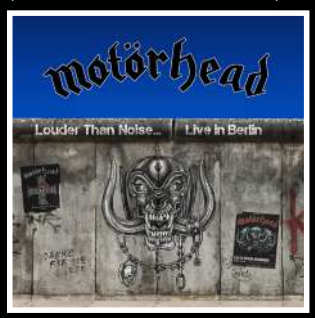
Photo: Enzo Mazzeo

ROCK CANDY PICKS

THE STUFF THAT'S GRABBED OUR ATTENTION

MOTÖRHEAD 'Louder Than Noise... Live In Berlin' DVD

(SILVER LINING MUSIC)



WHAT'S THE STORY?
Always popular in Germany, Motörhead played one of their biggest ever shows there on 12 December 2012 in front of 12,000 fans at the Berlin Velodrom. The set list from that night spans the band's entire career up to that point, featuring stone-cold classics like 'Overkill', as well as lesser-known numbers such as 'I Know How To Die' from 2010 album 'The World Is Yours'. And with both audio and film of the night available, you can choose how you want to swallow this dose of Motörhead.

WHAT DOES IT SOUND LIKE?
This is Motörhead, and as Lemmy never failed to remind us, they played rock'n'roll. But they always did it in their own inimitable style. As you'd expect the band sounds loud, raging, and dirty here, which is just the way everyone wanted them to be.

BEST BITS
You should play this album as a whole, rather than cherry picking certain numbers. But having said that, the band is on top form roaring through particularly powerful versions of 'Ace Of Spades' and 'Overkill'. Given the energy levels you'd never believe that Motörhead had already played these tracks hundreds and hundred of times live. I'm also particularly partial to 'The One To Sing The Blues' and the aforementioned 'I Know How To Die', which shows Motörhead had a lot more to them than a greatest hits grab bag.

THE VERDICT
'No Sleep 'Til Hammersmith' celebrates its 40th anniversary this year and will always be the ultimate Motörhead live album. But what 'Louder Than Noise... Live In Berlin' does very well is remind us that the Motörhead line-up of Lemmy, guitarist Phil Campbell, and drummer Mikkey Dee was very nearly as good as the classic trio of Lemmy, 'Fast' Eddie Clarke, and 'Philthy' Phil Taylor. This here performance is dynamic and forceful, pretty much everything you'd expect from Motörhead. All three musos are in splendid form, and you can feel the special rapport they had with the fans. A killer album.

Malcolm Dome

FRANCIS ROSSI *AAA*

(A WAY WITH MEDIA)

WHAT'S THE STORY?
AAA is a limited edition – 2000 copies – numbered deluxe coffee table book about Status Quo's enduring lead guitarist and vocalist. "The fans want that little bit extra," claims Francis Rossi in the publicity blurb. "They want to go behind the curtain, to be in the inner sanctum." These 304 largely photographic pages visit Rossi in his home studio, backstage, and during soundchecks.

WHAT FRANCIS ROSSI SAYS
"The questions are always there. 'What's happening next? What's going on next year? What's the set going to be? Will the public like it?' I know there are no answers to some of those questions and that it's impossible trying to get everything right; you can't please all the people all the time."

BEST BITS
The photography – mostly black and white – is excellent. *AAA* is full of a wide variety of close-up shots, from equipment and Rossi working on music, to the main man playing with his dog. Text-wise, it's most interesting when he seems to get angry at the response to songs "that you want people to like, but they don't – 'All We Really Wanna Do (Polly)' and 'Marguerita Time'." Francis claims not to care, though. "With the ones I really love, I don't give a f*ck who likes them and who doesn't."

DOES IT HIT THE SPOT?
The book reveals a part of what life is like for Quo's last remaining original. "I've suddenly realised, at 70 years old, that I really enjoy the whole process of [making music]," he admits. "Some days it's fantastic. Other days it's just average. But I genuinely enjoy the doing of it." There are tantalising glimpses of what makes one of rock's most fascinating and contrary characters tick, but more autobiographical words and fewer arty snaps would have helped. For £85 plus delivery you have to be a real obsessive to want this.

Dave Ling

Photo: Pep Bonnet

TRIUMPH 'Allied Forces'

(ROUND HILL RECORDS)

WHAT'S THE STORY?
Canadian hard rockers Triumph celebrate the 40th anniversary of their epic fifth studio album 'Allied Forces' with a sumptuous box set for Record Store Day (for which the band are Canadian ambassadors this year). If 'Allied Forces' was the Ontario trio's finest album, and many people think it is, then this set does it proud. What the band provide here is muscular heavy rock, tinted with a dash of progressive, and displaying a finely tuned ear for a melody. It's what great hard rock sounded like at the turn of the '80s before power ballads and how you looked in a video for MTV became more important factors in whether a band became successful or not.

WHAT BASSIST MIKE LEVINE SAYS
"We're extremely proud of 'Allied Forces'. It was the record that started the global rocket ride for us. And we're also excited to share some really great moments with our fans from our archives with this box set."

ANY EXTRAS?
By the bucketload! Not only is there a picture disc version of the original album, but you also get a double-vinyl live set recorded in Cleveland in 1981 on the 'Allied Forces' tour, a seven-inch single featuring 'Allied Forces' and 'Magic Power', a 24-page booklet with rare pics and essay, a retro tour book, poster, pass, and hand-written lyrics.

HIGHLIGHTS
As great as 'Allied Forces' sounds, and it still sounds bloody great, the gem here is the double-vinyl 'Live In Cleveland' set. While Triumph were no slouches in the studio they were an explosively brilliant live act, and that's captured wonderfully here. Along with 'Fight The Good Fight' and the title track from 'Allied Forces', it features the best from the band's previous four albums including 'Lay It On The Line', 'I Live For The Weekend', 'Rock 'N' Roll Machine' and the epic 'Blinding Light Show/Moonchild' prog metal work out, capturing Levine, drummer Gil Moore, and guitarist Rik Emmett at the very top of their game.

Jerry Ewing

NANCY WILSON 'You And Me'

(CARRY ON MUSIC)

WHAT'S THE STORY?
Like many musos in COVID times, the singer and guitarist best known for her work in Heart was forced to create at home in Northern California, then send digital recordings all over the place for contributions from mover-and-shaker pals including Taylor Hawkins, Duff McKagen, and Sammy Hagar. Clearly good contacts to have!

WHAT DOES IT SOUND LIKE?
Nancy's first ever solo album sounds varied, in the same way that early Heart sounded varied. Lovely vulnerable acoustic numbers, strutting toughies, radio rockers – they're all present and correct. 'You And Me' doesn't sound remotely contemporary, but the underlying vibe is that Nancy has made her money and at the age of 67 doesn't give a flying f*ck about pleasing anyone but herself. That probably also explains why there are a clutch of cover versions here, including Springsteen's 'The Rising', Simon & Garfunkel's 'The Boxer', and The Cranberries' 'Dreams'.

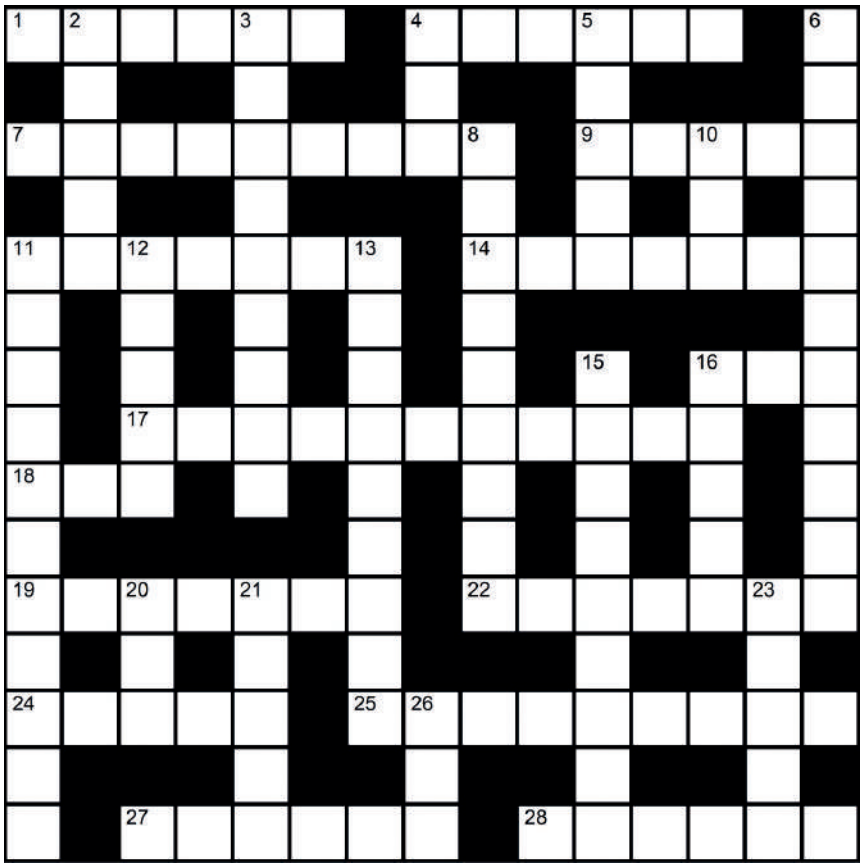
BEST BITS
The title track and opening song is an acoustic letter to Nancy's mum, which might sound sappy, but is actually very moving. 'Party At The Angel Ballroom' is the Hawkins/McKagen showcase that features both a memorable hook and a rollicking delivery. The quietly brooding 'Walk Away' is probably my favourite number, the bitterly resigned lyrics making me wonder whether it's about the difficult relationship Nancy now appears to have with fellow Heart member and sister Ann. The pick of the covers is a reworking of Pearl Jam's 'Daughter', a great song interestingly re-imagined. The rest are faithful to the originals and so are diverting rather than vital.

THE VERDICT
This is a noble endeavour that has a definite purity to it. It's not trying to be something it's not, which is exactly what we want from Nancy Wilson. She's a rockingly sensitive gal, and for my money this music fits her way better than the overly manufactured mid-'80s commercial glory days of Heart.

Howard Johnson

CROSSWORD

It's time to take on the ultimate challenge!



5 DOWN: JUDAS PRIEST

For answers go to our website www.rockcandymag.com

ACROSS

1 Jimmy Barnes and Co. wielded a Cold variety. (6)

4 The Cult seemed to be angry about this rather inoffensive little bloom. (6)

7 "*Don't want to see no tears/--------- your fears*," sang Kiss on 1977's 'Larger Than Life'. (9)

9 This Eastern-friendly AOR mob saw a 'Sign In The Sky' back in 1989. (5)

11 The Canadian metallers who dealt in 'Violence & Force' circa 1984 (7)

14 Last two words in the name of a North-Eastern NWOBHM act that released the 'Wild Cat' debut album in 1980. (3,4)

16 Maiden's Bruce Dickinson has long been nicknamed 'The --- Raid Siren'. (3)

17 The late, lamented Status Quo legend. (4,7)

18 Singer Marc Storace was in this Swiss 'progressive heavy rock' band before Krokus. (3)

19 LA metallers fronted by Ann Boleyn. (7)

22 Much-touted '80s San Francisco rockers featuring Ron Yocom. (3,4)

24 In 1984 Golden Earring sang on the track 'N.E.W.S.': "*Let me hear you say/North, Scandinavia, Alaska, Siberia/East, Japan, China and* -----". (5)

25 REO Speedwagon frontman Kevin Cronin was aiming for the impossible with this superb single from 1978. '---- For Me -- ---'. (4,2,3)

27 The Phil from Girl and Leppard.

28 "*Misery ------ company/Yes it does, yes it does*," crooned Steven Tyler on the 1973 Aerosmith song 'Somebody'. (6)

DOWN

2 Canadian rockers from Ontario fronted by Brian Vollmer. (5)

3 Destruction claimed to have a 'Dissatisfied ---------' on 1987's 'Release From Agony'. (9)

4 A not-too-PC title from Nazareth's eponymous 1971 debut, '--- Man'. (3)

5 "-- --- *do it*," insisted Judas Priest on the song 'United'. (2,3)

6 Surname of the man who produced 1983's Thin Lizzy album 'Thunder And Lightning'. (11)

8 James Hetfield's extensive guitar collection includes some Gibson ---------. (9)

10 '-- - Rebel', claimed Accept way back in 1980. (2,1)

11 Album-closing, country-referencing Dio epic '----- (The ------ Are On)' (5,6)

12 These Swiss-American rockers released their 'First Strike' album in 1983. See what they did there? (5)

13 In 1986 Randy Rhoads's brother Kelle took an 'Expedition (To The --- ------)' with his band Rhoads. (3,6)

15 Big-haired former Faith No More guitarist. (3,6)

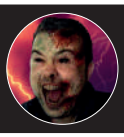
16 Welsh three-piece Budgie found themselves 'All -- ---' on 1978's impeccably titled 'Impeckable'. (2,3)

20 Poorly spelled first word in the name of some rather popular '70s legends. (3)

21 'Can't Have -- ---', claimed obscure rockers Widow on 1984's 'Gone Too Far' album. (2,3)

23 First name of a one-time Guns N' Roses guitar player who appeared on 'The Spaghetti Incident?' (5)

26 Spinal Tap's manager --- Faith, played by the sadly-departed Tony Hendra. (3)



The *Rock Candy Mag* crossword is compiled by former *Kerrang!* writer **Jason Arnopp**, who recently launched *Possessed By Metal*, a brand new YouTube channel dedicated to the loud stuff, with a strong 1980s skew. Set to feature interviews, rankings, reviews, and lots of vinyl, the channel recently presented a Top 20 list of The Best Dio Songs Ever. Check it out here: **bit.ly/arnopptube**

Photo: Getty Images/Paul Natkin

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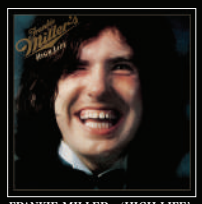
FRANKIE MILLER
'ONCE IN A BLUE MOON'

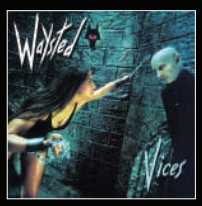

FRANKIE MILLER - 'HIGH LIFE'

FRANKIE MILLER - 'THE ROCK'

SILENT RAGE
'SHATTERED HEARTS'

SILENT RAGE
'DON'T TOUCH ME THERE'

AVALON - 'EVERYMAN A KING'



WAYSTED - 'VICES'

LION - 'DANGEROUS ATTRACTION'

STRIFE - 'BACK TO THUNDER'

STRIFE - 'RUSH'

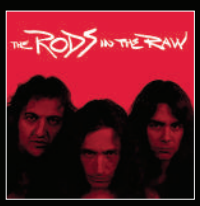
WILDLIFE - 'BURNING'

LEGS DIAMOND - 'TOWN BAD GIRL'

LEGS DIAMOND - 'OUT ON BAIL'

LEGS DIAMOND
'LAND OF THE GUN'

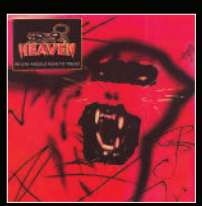
GIANT - 'LAST OF THE RUNAWAYS'



THE RODS - 'IN THE RAW'

THE RODS - 'LIVE

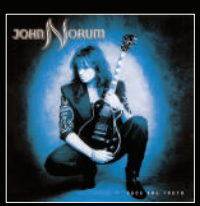
THE RODS - 'LET THEM EAT METAL'



HEAVEN
'WHERE ANGELS FEAR TO TREAD

MOLLY HATCHET - 'S/T'

OHN NORUM - 'TAKING CONTROL'

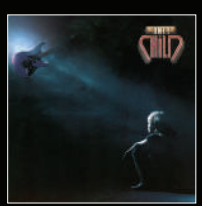


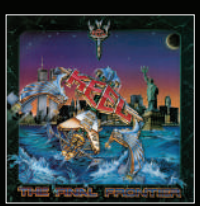
JOHN NORUM - 'FACE THE TRUTH'

JOHN NORUM
'ANOTHER DESTINATION'

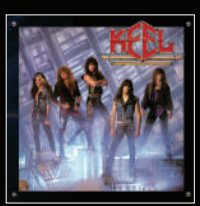
SABU - 'S/T'

SABU - 'HEARTBREAK'


ONLY CHILD - 'S/T



KEEL - 'THE FINAL FRONTIER'

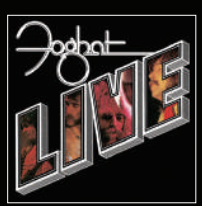


KEEL - 'S/T'

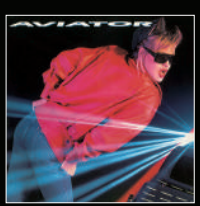
FASTWAY -'TRICK OR TREAT'

FASTWAY - 'ALL FIRED UP'

FOGHAT - 'FOOL FOR THE CITY'



FOGHAT - 'LIVE'



AVIATOR - 'S/T'

ANGEL - 'WHITE HOT'

ANGEL - 'SINFUL'

ANGEL - 'LIVE WITHOUT A NET'

COMING SOON

FRANKIE MILLER - 'FULL HOUSE'

FRANKIE MILLER
'DOUBLE TROUBLE

JOE LYNN TURNER - 'RESCUE YOU'

BRITNY FOX - 'S/T'

DONNIE IRIS
'BACK ON THE STREETS'

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